

MECHANICAL SOUL

NEW PALTZ COMIX NO 3

STORIES



IN THE INTEREST OF SCIENCE



JOJO HAD ALWAYS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION FROM THE SCIENTISTS, BUT JUST BEFORE THE LAUNCH THEY EXAMINED HIM WITH INCREASED INTEREST.



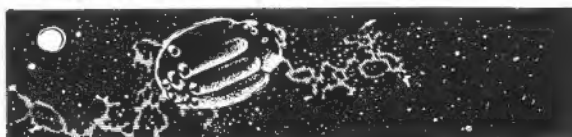
NO LONGER UNDER THE SCIENTISTS' SCRUTINY, THE MONKEY TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE EXPERIMENTAL CRAFT.



HIS MAJESTIC SENSATION AT TAKE-OFF CHANGED TO BEWILDERMENT, WHEN A JET MISFIRED,



HURTLING HIM INTO THE REALM OF SPACE.



HIS VESSEL ROAMED FOR EONS UNTIL ...



AN ALIEN SHIP FOUND AND TOOK POSSESSION OF IT.



THE SPECIMEN IS IN EXCELLENT CONDITION DOCTOR.

WE MUST BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS WITH IT.

THE ONLY EXAMPLE OF INTELLIGENT LIFE FROM EARTH WE HAVE FOUND.

NOW WE EVEN HAVE A MEMBER OF THE EXTINCT SPECIES MAN, FOR OUR INTERGALACTIC MUSEUM.

MEDHOUSE



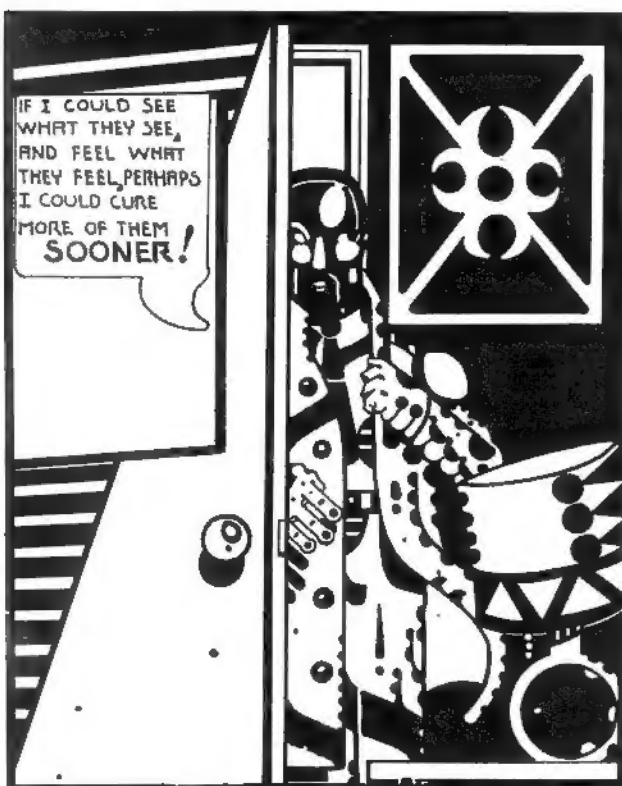
Produced By
Jeff Bonivert
And The
Progressive Art
Studio
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POOR DEVILS,
COMPLETELY
MFD!



I WISH I COULD
HELP THESE PEOPLE
IN SOME OTHER WAY
THAN BY STUDYING
THEM AND
ANALYZING
THEIR PROBLEMS.

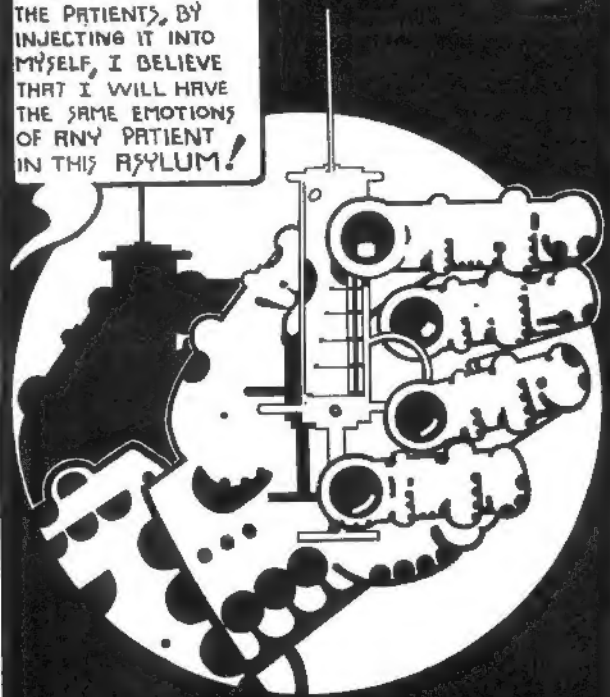


IF I COULD SEE
WHAT THEY SEE,
AND FEEL WHAT
THEY FEEL, PERHAPS
I COULD CURE
MORE OF THEM
SOONER!

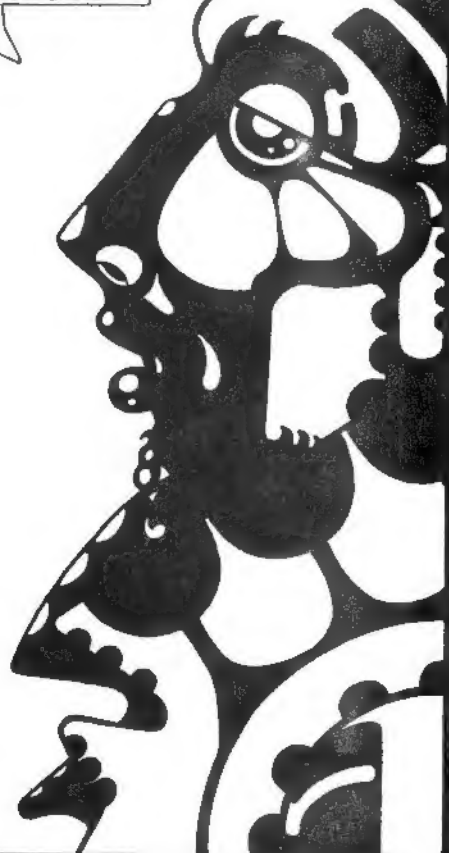


WELL, IF TONIGHT'S
EXPERIMENT PROVES
SUCCESSFUL,
I WILL GO DOWN
IN HISTORY!

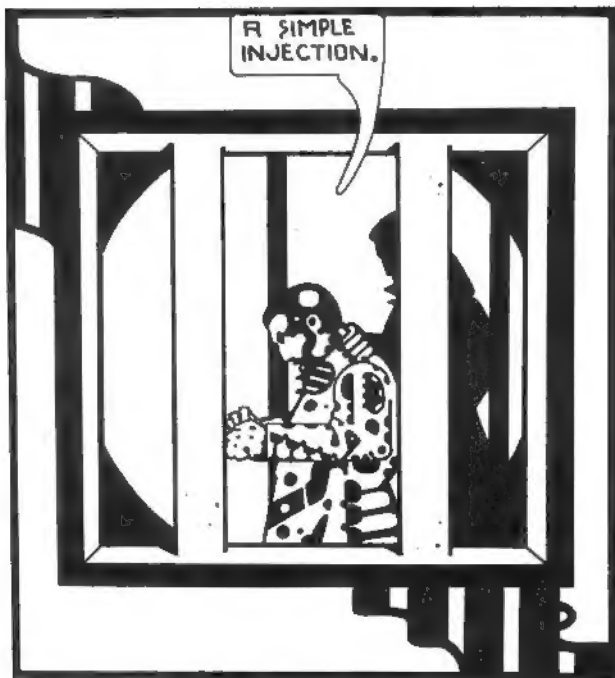
THIS NEEDLE IS FILLED
WITH A SMALL
AMOUNT OF SPINAL
FLUID FROM ONE OF
THE PATIENTS, BY
INJECTING IT INTO
MYSELF, I BELIEVE
THAT I WILL HAVE
THE SAME EMOTIONS
OF ANY PATIENT
IN THIS ASYLUM!



AND WITH THE SAME THOUGHTS
AND EMOTIONS, I WILL BE ABLE
TO AVOID YEARS OF RESEARCH
AND STUDY, BY GOING DIRECT TO
A PATIENT'S PROBLEM.



A SIMPLE
INJECTION.



NOTHING HAS
HAPPENED. IT
FAILED!

IF ONLY I
HAD MORE
TIME, MAYBE

ALLRIGHT COME
ALONG WITH
US, YOUR TIME
IS UP!

WHY HAVE THE
LIGHTS BEEN
TURNED OUT,
WHO ARE YOU?

HEY STOP!
WHO ARE YOU?

SHUT-UP!

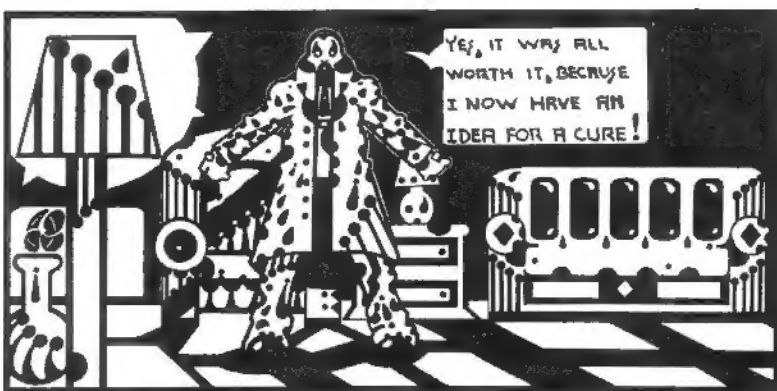
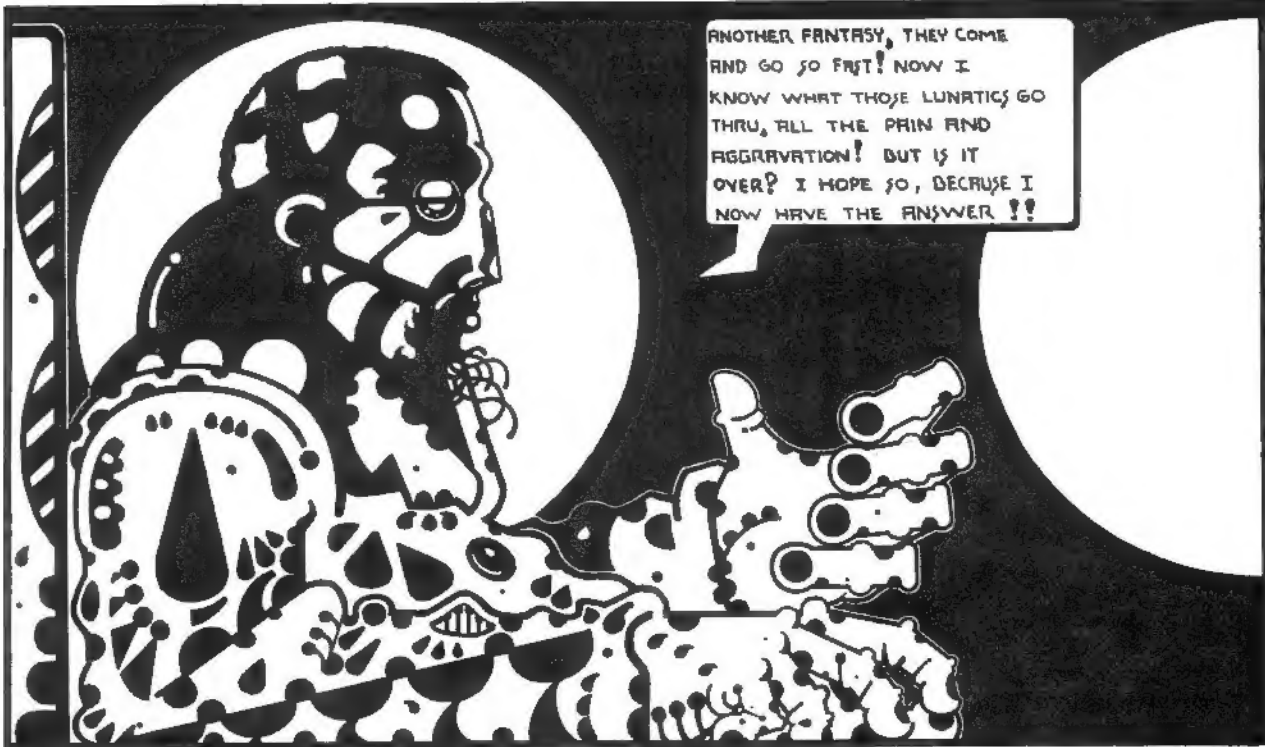
TIGHTEN UP
THAT ROPE.

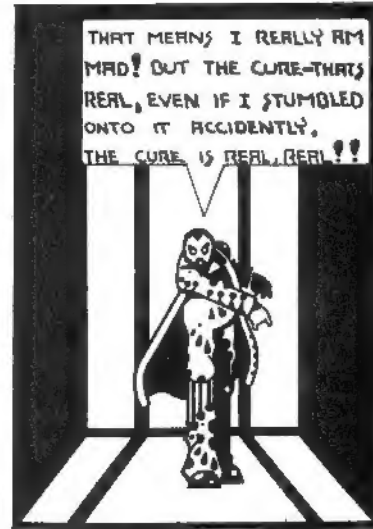
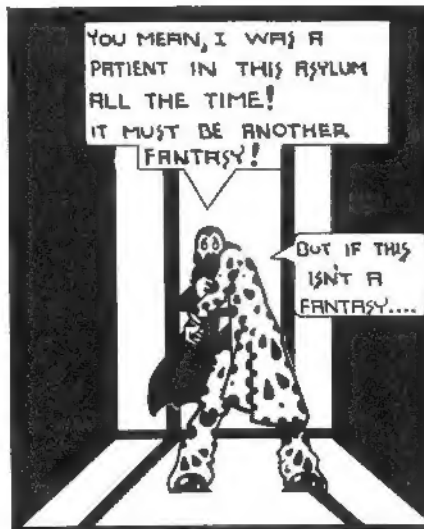
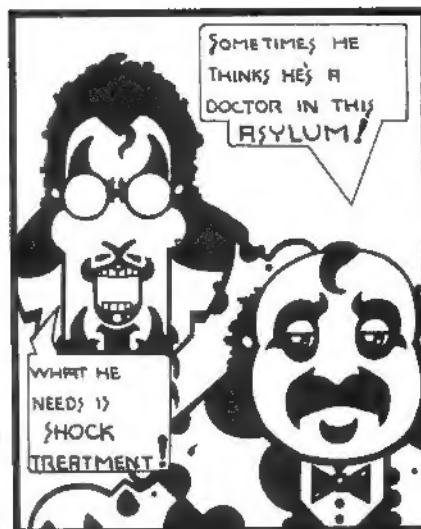
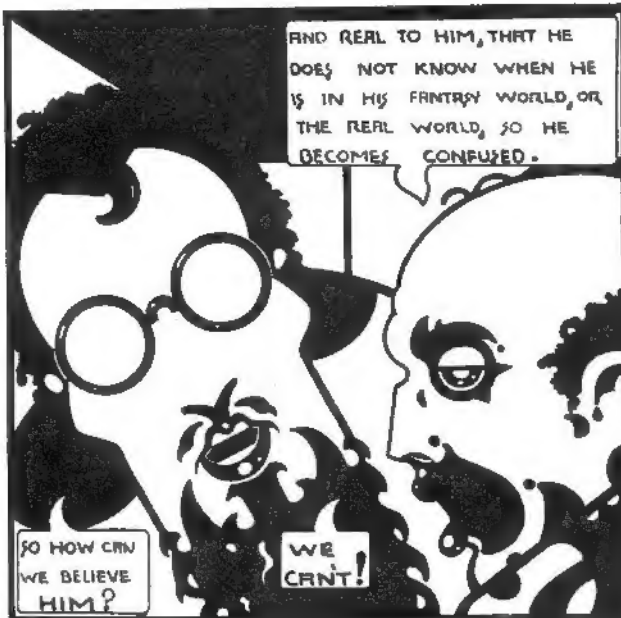
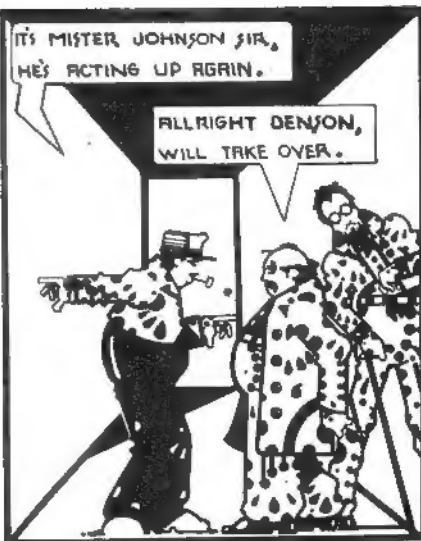
YOU ARE HEREBY
SENTENCE TO HANG
BY THE NECK UNTIL DEAD.

I AM A
RESPECTED
DOCTOR,
LISTEN TO ME!

SORRY BOY,
BUT THAT'S
REALITY
FOR YOU.

IM A DOCTOR!
HEY, THEY'RE GONE.
IT MUST BE THE
SERUM. IT MUST.





LISTEN TO ME, IM NOT
INSANE! THE CURE IS
REAL, LISTEN TO ME
YOU FOOLS, THE CURE
IS REAL! REAL! REAL!

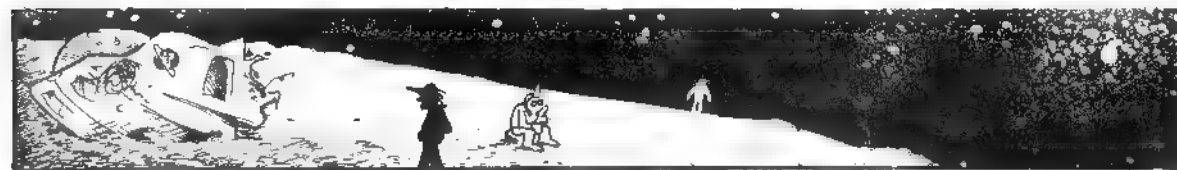


POOR MISTER JOHNSON,
HE ABOVE ALL, SHOULD
KNOW, THAT IN A
MADHOUSE IT'S ALL FANTASY,
AND NO REALITY !!

END.

FOOD



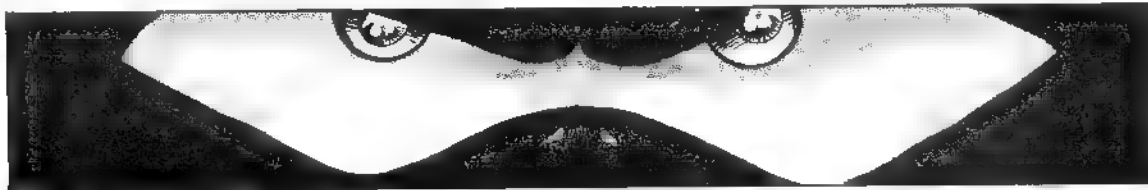
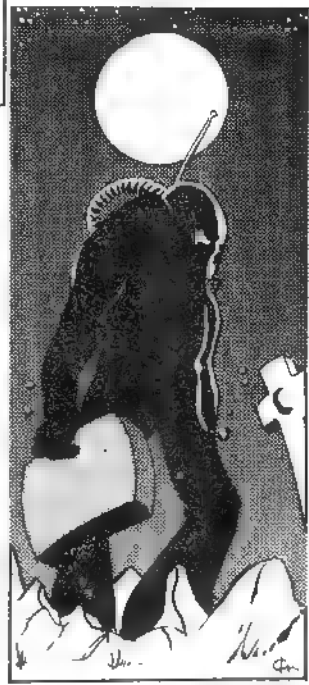
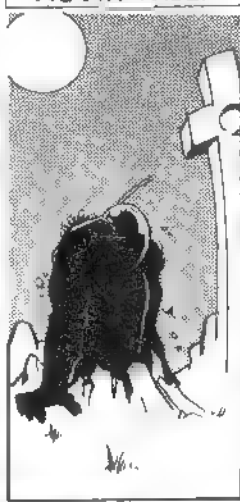


IN SPITE OF ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS

SCRIPT/PENCILS:
©1977
KEVIN MEEK

First off, buddy—for the record—yes, there were indeed visitors from other planets. They came to Earth a millenium or so ago, and left all kinds of neat stuff behind—carvings, rock formations, stone drawing, etc., ad nauseum. This story, however, tells of one other thing they left behind. One other thing that was far...more . DEADLY.

INKS:
P. 1- MICHAEL T. GILBERT
P. 2- ALAN J. GORDON
LETTERS:
MARY McALLISTER

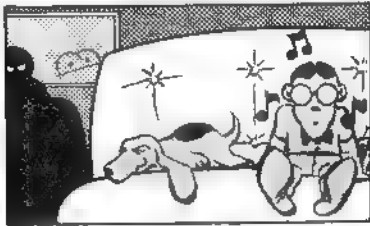


"I awoke. It mattered little how long I lay dormant. All that mattered was my programmed objective; the termination of this hapless race. They had reached a level of technology potentially dangerous to the home world. And so.... I awoke."



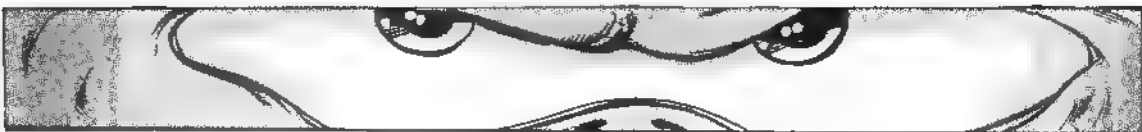
"I proceeded as programmed: 'Upon emergence, contact with any mode of transportation is to be effected. Board peacefully. (If this is disputed, eliminate all obstacles.) Your appearance will cause the aliens to panic. Disregard'"

"Odd..."

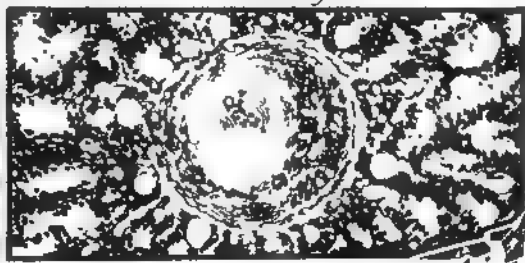
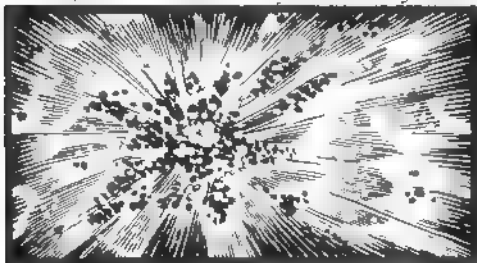


"... these creatures are not even mildly alarmed by my appearance. Apparently they are far more mindless than anticipated. A pity. No resistance. No challenge."

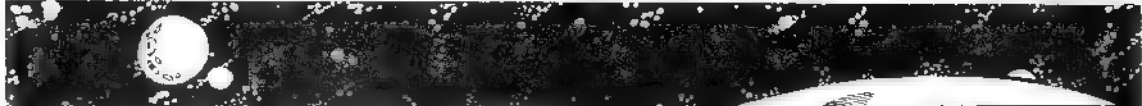
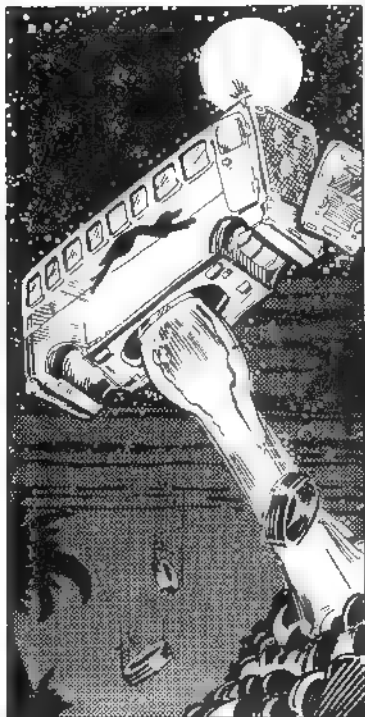
"It matters little, regardless..."



"...for soon the forces contained in this case will reach **CRITICAL MASS**. Half this globe will be leveled in the ensuing holocaust. Radioactive ions will then spread to the already contaminated atmosphere. Once there, they will fuse, solidifying the atmosphere, thereby sealing the entire planet in a solid impermeable prison. Suffocation will eliminate the remaining..."



"What?"



"Good work, Doctor."

"Thank you, General."



- ORION COLONIES -
- SLAVE GIRL -
- GREEN TAIL - ED SPECIES -

PROLOGUE:





YOU'RE A MARTIAN... AND THE FORM YOU'VE TAKEN IS THAT OF AN EARTHMAN.
YOU'RE THE LAST MEMBER OF A DEAD WORLD. YOU'RE...

THE REBIRTH... FROM MARZZ!

ART: MICHAEL G. BERT © 1976 THE REBIRTH... SCRIPT HARVEY SOBEL

IN AN OVERPOWERING SENSE OF LONELINESS AND DESPAIR, JONES LEAVES THE FLOPHOUSE



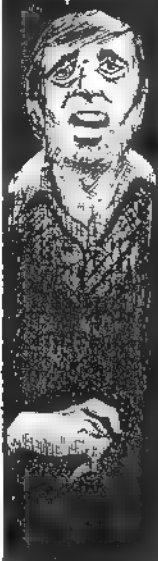
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS, A SMILE CROSSES THIS TIRED FACE



CHIEF HARDING? GUESS
YOU DIDNT HEAR THE
NEWS, THEN?



NEWS?



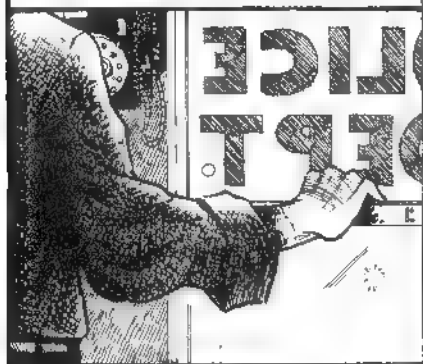
OLD HARDING WAS SHOT- KILLED -
OH - 3 YEARS AGO SOME SOCIETY
AH - LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS OR
SOMETHIN'. NEVER DID CATCH THEM



VERY EMBARR-
ASSING FOR
THE FORCE.



ALL SET TO LEAVE THE PRECINT,
JONES STOPS TO CHECK OUT ONE
LAST LEAD, A SLIM ONE PERHAPS,
BUT ONE THAT LEADS HIM TO...



... THE FORWARDING ADDRESS OF
DIANNE MEADE. IT IS WITH GREAT
WEARINESS THAT HE RINGS THE
BELL...



YES, WHAT
CAN I
JOHN/DETECTIVE
JOHN JONES



... MANHUNTER!!

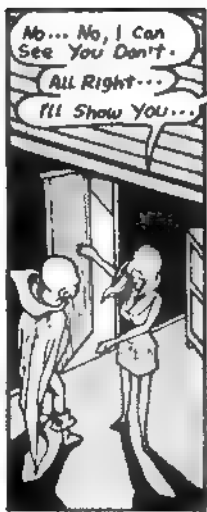




J'NN JNNZZ, MANHUNTER, FOLLOWS DIANNE INSIDE. AN AWKWARD SILENCE PREVAILS UNTIL...

How Did You Discover...
Dianne... What's Wrong?

YOU DON'T... know?



No... No, I Can See You Don't...
All Right...
I'll Show You...



...YOUR SON!!

WHAT CAN A MARTIAN SAY? A MARTIAN... A CREATURE FAR SUPERIOR TO EARTHMEN; ONE WHO CAN SOAR UNAIDED THROUGH THE SKIES, TURN INVISIBLE, HYPNOTISE MASSES OF PEOPLE! YET THIS MARTIAN NOW LACKS THE POWER TO SAY HE'S SORRY!!



DIANNE...

ANOTHER MOMENT'S SILENCE. THE FORMER DETECTIVE MULLS OVER THE CONVERSATION, AS IF HE MIGHT FIND SOME LOOPHOLE, SOME RATIONAL FOR HIS MISTAKE. AND THEN...

I... Didn't Know. He... He's A Fine Looking Boy.

A Twelve Month Pregnancy ~~~ Twelve Months! Then Four Long, Lonely Years To Master His Powers. Till That-Chameleon Power-Arrived. He Was An Outcast... A Freak For the Kids To Make FUN OF.

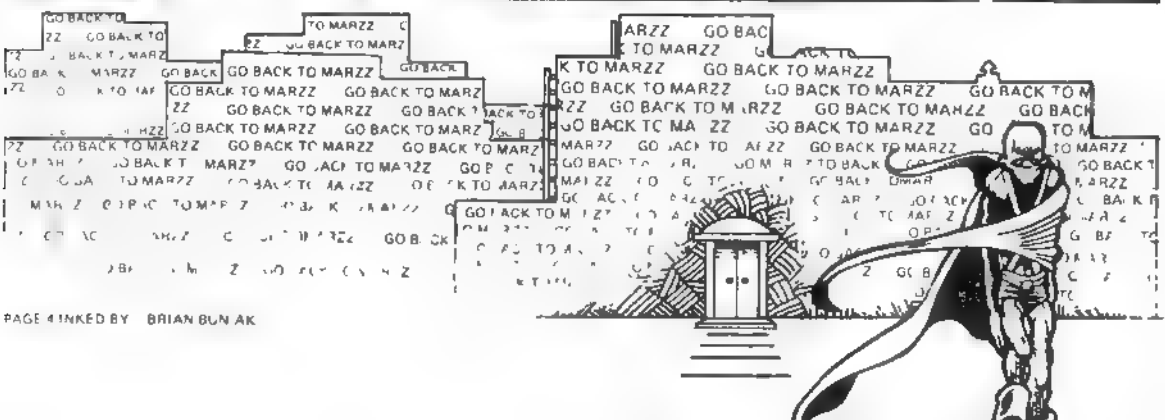


AND NOW... YOU RETURN!

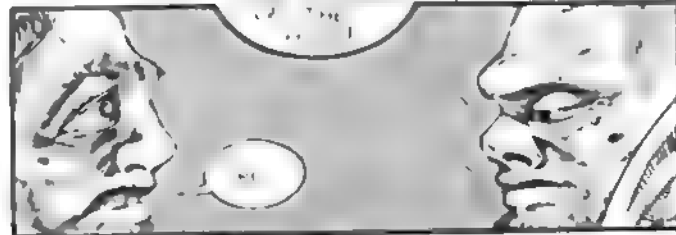
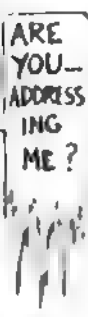


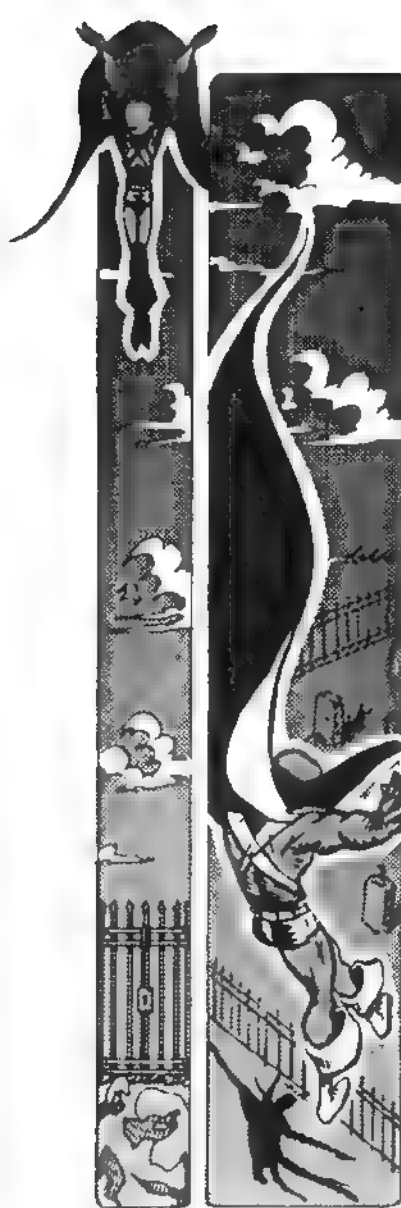
Look, Jones...
J'nn... Or
Whatever You
Call Yourself;
Why In Hell Don't
You Go Away?

Go Back To
MARZZ You...
You Tin...
SUPERMAN!!



THE WORDS PERSISTED LONG AFTER J'NNZZ HAD LEFT DIANNE BUT HOW LONG
 HAD BEEN A 5 POINT 2 WITH 33.5 OF THE 100 THAT'S ALL





THESE EARTHMEN NEEDED ME THEN - AND PERHAPS - EVEN MORE NOW.



A MOMENT'S PAUSE NO LIGHTNING FLASHING TO DRAMATICALLY ENHANCE HIS VOW. NO SUN SHINING BRIGHTLY THROUGH THE CLOUDS. BUT ON THIS DAY A VOW IS MADE RENEWED SO TO SPEAK.



AND FROM THE ASHES OF A SHATTERED LIFE - ONE LOST SOUL RE DISCOVERS HIMSELF ...

Jhnn J'nnzz...



--- REBORN !!



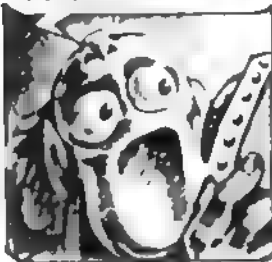
ASTEROID

STORY:
Michael Gilbert
ART:
Roub Vagina &
Michael Gilbert

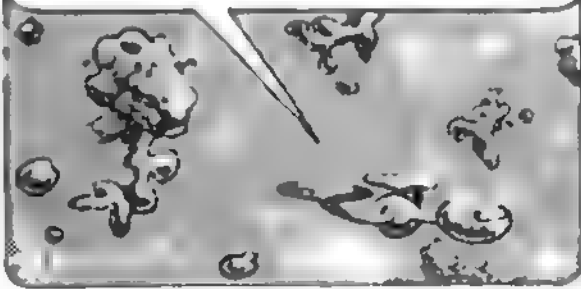
GODDAMN ASTEROIDS! A WHOLE DAMN CLUSTER OF 'EM - A FARM 'PAK TO MANUEVER ...



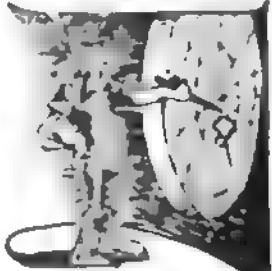
GODDAMN IT!!
OUR INSTRUMENTS
DETECT LIFE



ALL RIGHT - TRY TO WHAT ARE THE INSTRUMENTAL READINGS, NAVIGATION?



THEY'RE ALL CLUSTERED AT THE END OF THE ASTEROID CLUSTER



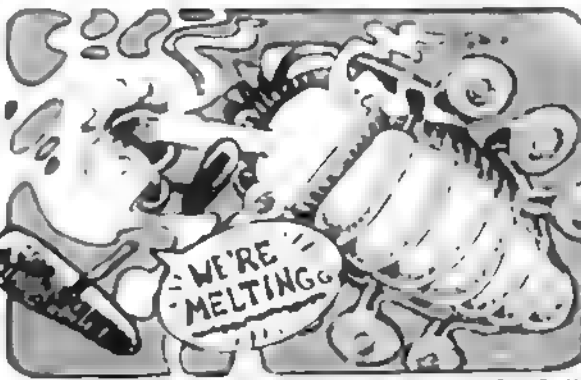
ODD - I NEVER SAW
ANYTHING LIKE
THIS



THEY SEEM TO BE MADE OF DIFFERENT METALLIC ALLOYS - LIFE FORM 20M AHEAD



GODDAMN IT!!
OUR SHIP CAN'T
TAKE IT!



AND ONE MORE ASTEROID JOINS THE CLUSTER" — FIN

ROT



I AM A DEAD MAN, I
HAUNT THE CEMETARY AT NIGHT.
WHEN THE LIVING WORLD
SEES ME, THEY RUN IN FRIGHT,
MY ONCE BRIGHT FLESH IS NOW
GREEN WITH MOLD!
MY BLUE EYES ARE GONE,
THEY'RE JUST EMPTY SOCKETS
DECAYED AND OLD.

Produced By
Jeff Bonivert
And The
Progressive Art
Studio
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MEN CALL ME THE LIVING DEAD!
HOW I BECAME SUCH, I DO
NOT KNOW, OR EVEN CARE.



I AM A CREATURE OF FEAR, AND
MY PURPOSE IS CLEAR, TO PROTECT
THE DEAD FROM THOSE WHO WOULD
DISTURB US, AND ROB OUR GRAVES.



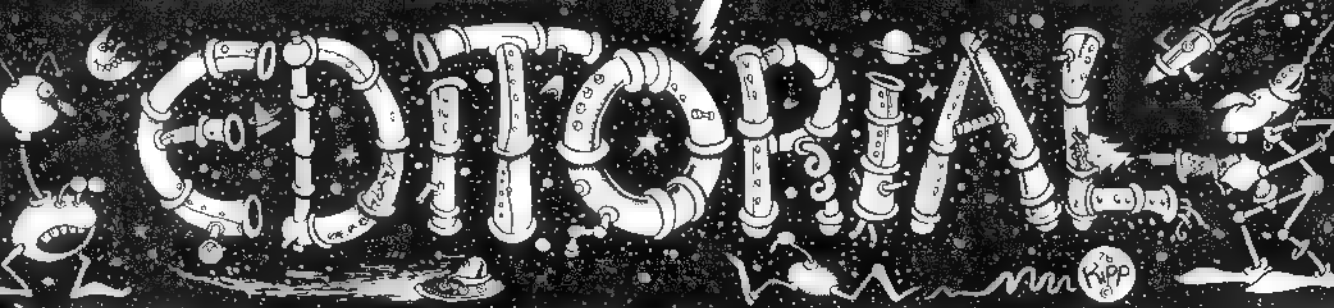


MY ONLY
FRIENDS
ARE THE
BLACK CATS
THAT SIT
ON THE
CEMETARY
FENCE.



AND WHEN I HEAR THE WIND
HOWL, I GET IN SUCH A
MOOD I DON'T KNOW HOW
WHEN I SEE GREY CLOUDS IN
THE SKY, I JUST WANT TO
SCREAM WITH LAUGHTER
I DON'T KNOW WHY.

YES, I AM A DEAD MAN.
I HAUNT THE CEMETARY
AT NIGHT, WHEN YOU SEE
ME YOU'LL RUN IN FRIGHT.



Well, friends, as they say in the old Superman cartoons—the 11th hour is here! Artwork has been shot, negatives opaqued, a printing date set. In effect, the hard work is over and the fun part begins. I realize the type of this editorial page is so small as to be nearly illegible—but there's an awful lot to be said, so please bear with us. It's been three long years since New Paltz Comix #2 ("Amazing Adult Fantasies") hit the stands—and, yes, an awful lot has happened in that time. On the personal side, the editorial we've moved from New York to foggy California (just a stone's throw from San Francisco). My cartooning career has finally begin to take off, having been printed in Quack, Star-Reach, and Slow-Death, among others. About time, too.

And New Paltz Comix itself? Well, this third issue has seen a vast improvement in quality over the second, which demonstrated a huge improvement over...well, you get the basic idea I'm sure (except for the slow among you—and they wouldn't be reading a long editorial. They'll spend the next two hours looking for the story about the girl on the cover. Keep lookin', guys!). This issue's basic theme is Sci-Fi and the supernatural—hence the "Iron-Soul Stories" title (inspired by Larry Todd). And now, let's take a look at a few of this issue's creators.

THE ARTISTS * * *

LARRY TODD: Larry is the fellow responsible for our seductive front cover—easily one of his best oil works to date. Painting aside, in his day Larry has done work for Warren, Skywald, Sci-Fi pulps, and a whole mess of underground comix—including his long-lived Dr. Atomic series. When I first settled in the Bay Area (early '75), Larry was one of the very few undergrounders willing to take the time out to be friendly and encouraging to a novice cartoonist. Also, in looks and actions, he's the only U.G. cartoonist who's managed to live up to all my fantasies of what the perfect underground cartoonist would be like.

MICHAEL T. GILBERT. Born May 7, 1951. Editor, Artist, Writer, Lady Killer (cough) man about town. This issue, Gilbert pencilled "U'nnn J'nzz"; wrote and designed "Ooops!"; wrote and illustrated "Welcome Home Traveller"; inked R.I.P. and "In Spite of Ancient Astronauts"; designed the Iron-Soul Stories logo; drew and colored the back cover illustration. "Whew!" Great in the sack too one hears. Sleeps like a log. Incredible ego. More Gilbert can be found in Star-Reach #9, Slow-Death 8, Quack #1-6 (to date), and of course New Paltz Comix #1 and #2 (Amazing Adult Fantasies).

RAOUL VEZINA: Present company excluded, Raoul is the only artist whose work has appeared in all three issues of NPC (he designed one of last issue's covers—a beauty!). Working in upstate N.Y., (in the New Paltz area) Raoul's serio-cartoony approach to comix is always a joy to behold. He's been published in all sorts of obscure publications (most recently Gasm #1), and now maybe he'll get the recognition he so richly thinks he deserves! A good artist, a good musician, and a good friend.

BOB KESSEL: Man of Mystery. Collaborated with Raoul in this issue's beautiful "Food." Last seen in the Bay Area. Where will he strike next?

BRIAN BUNIAK: Joining us again this issue, after his fine "Spirit" parody in NPC #2, Brian wrote and penciled his "R.I.P." story—based on our back cover illo. Brian is potentially one of the best storytellers in or out of professional comics. His story this issue is just the tip of the iceberg. In his non-comix alter ego, Brian, born-again Christian, is the art director for a large New Jersey based Christian Newspaper. (O.K., Brian—you weren't forgotten on this editorial page!)

AL GORDON: As an inker assisting Steve Leialoha, Al has done a great deal of unsigned artwork for Marvel—most notably in the "Star Wars" comic. With this issue he tackles his first (almost) solo story—"Ooops!"—and proves to be pretty adept with a pencil, too. We'll be seeing a lot more of Al's work, as he's just started doing solo inking jobs for Marvel. Excelsior, Effendi!

MARY McALLISTER: Mary is the lady responsible for the lovely calligraphy in "Ooops" and "In Spite of Ancient Astronauts." An office manager by day, she's become quite the letterer in her spare time. As a side note, on October 9, 1977 she and Gordon finally tied the knot. After living in sin for almost two years. Hell, I don't know why! Congratulations to any case, folks.

KEVIN MEEK First discovered in one of my cartooning classes, Kevin's first story, "In Spite of Ancient Astronauts" makes its debut this issue. Kevin has a fine storytelling sense, hates Gil Kane's work, and can't ink for beans. Al and I took a page apiece of his story to ink in—and the rest, as they say, is bubblegum. But seriously folks.

TIM BOXELL Most old time underground readers are familiar with "Grim Tim's" cheerful stories. Using the pen name 'Gristy', Tim has done work for virtually every U.G. publisher in such titles as "Slow Death", "Bizarre Sex", "Comix Book", and a solo book, Image of The Beast. Tim's fear fraught fable, "Old Fruit" ripens in this issue—a "ghastly" tale in the old E.C. tradition. In his own words, Tim is... a self-taught cartoonist-illustrator, worked for newspapers, comix, video, film set design, posters. Have over 150 pages of comix in print. My worst enemy—the clock!

MARK ROLAND: Mark's mystical "There's No Race Like Home" contributes the second largest story—nine pages well spent. This is his first story—and one of the most interesting of the 'Soul Stories' from a pot/strip standpoint. Mark's prime passions are painting, Pre-Raphaelite art, writing, music, comix, and fantasy illustration. "Whew!"

CLIFFORD NEAL Our man from Connecticut. Cliff's beautiful nudes are in a class by themselves. You'll see his "Or on Save Girl" pin-up somewhere in this issue (a good incentive to read the book if ever heard one).

LARRY RIPPEE If you can glance at the beginning of this editorial without losing your place, please do so. Go on. It's OK! Rippee is the one responsible for our zany editorial logo. Ripp's crazy drawings (from the Basil Wolverton correspondence school) have graced such diverse magazines over the years as Arcade, City, S.F. Comix Book, and the (mercifully) short-lived Hee Hee. Considering that he's been in the underground since almost the beginning, it's surprising that his work is almost unknown outside the field. It's surprising that he's a complete flop. A zero. And I doubt if even a stint in "Iron-Soul Stories" can salvage your career, Ripp. Too bad, loser. But seriously...

JEFF BONIVERT: Of all the fine works in this book, and all the very talented artists doing these works—Jeff's artwork, to me, is far and away the most powerful, graphically. Jeff's maniacally geometric style, as seen in "Madhouse", "Rot", and "Black As Ink", strike one as the first real departure in traditional comic style in years. Jeff is a 23 year old student at a graphic arts trade school. With the exception of "My Fears" in Star-Reach #6, the works in this book are Jeff's first published stories. An entire Jeff Bonivert comic book "Weird Things" was originally to be published by an established J.G. company. That, unfortunately, fell through. Their loss was our gain—as some of the pages in "Iron Soul Stories" were originally meant for that book. Rot and Madhouse were drawn in 1975. "Black As Ink" was pencilled in 1976 and inked October '77. Jeff spends anywhere from 20 to 80 hours per page. Wotta perfectionist! The future? In Jeff's own words: "To continue my style, to improve, and explore. It's punk art, it's progressive art, Progressive art, it's something different, it's something better. F'n

THE STORIES...

Some of you real old-time fans may remember a really grade 'B' character from the mid fifties who saw print in the back of D.C.'s Detective Comix. The strip was about this guy from Mars who gets stuck on earth and starts fighting crooks (sound familiar, you old fossils?). His name was J'onn J'onzz, and the first few episodes of this grotesque looking character showed wonderful potential—potential that Nat'onal never realized (naturally!). Well, our character J'onn J'onzz isn't him. He's the other guy's first cousin. From an almost identical parallel dimension. Earth ☺. Or something. Anyway, ace actuary Harvey A. Sobel worked with me on a new version of the character... written and drawn as we had always envisioned the character. It was drawn, for fun in my spare time, from 1973 to 1976. We plotted the story together, Harvey writing the actual dialogue while I worked on the pencils. Then, in an experiment to find out just how much different inking styles could effect the final art, 5 different inkers were drafted into working on a different page each. The final result can be found inside in "J'onn J'onzz: Rebirth." The inkers, in order, were Tim Boxell (P 1), Raoul Vezina (P 2), Larry Rippee (P 3), Brian Buniak (P 4), Mark Roland (P 5), and Michael T. Gilbert (P 6). Examples of their individual works can be found throughout this book. The more perceptive among you may notice a similarity among some of the "Iron-Soul Stories"—namely, a certain penchant for spacemen departing from grave plots. No accident. Three different stories were written based on the back cover (four stories if you want to stretch things and count "Welcome Home Traveler"). The stories include B. Buniak's "R.I.P.", Kevin Meek's "In Spite of Ancient Astronauts", and Gilbert/Gordon's "Ooops!" An earlier version of "Ooops!" was sent to Brian, who in turn penciled it and mailed it to Mike Machlan. Mike in turn inked it and mailed it. The post office in turn lost it. I, in turn, after pulling what little hair remains, asked A. Gordon to redraw it. My thanks to Al, Brian, and Mike. Sure wish I could've seen it, though. The back cover was done with airbrush—and was hand separated.

ODDS 'N ENDS ***

Quite a few highly talented newcomers this time around—many with first-time stories. Al Gordon, Jeff Bonivert (almost first), Bob Kessel, Mark Roland, and Kevin Meek. Welcome aboard, guys. A few words of thanks for encouragement and assistance go to Mike Friedrich, Ron Turner, Edgar Bacelis, Bruce Simon, Barry Segal, and Sonda Walsh. Also my deepest regrets to F. Frazetta and Tom Maxwell—last minute additions made it impossible to find space for their fine artwork. If sales are decent this time around, there probably will be a New Paltz Comix #4 at some point! In all likelihood a different theme will be used—possibly the supernatural. We'll see. Submissions are encouraged. But only send xerox copies of your work—with a stamped, self-addressed envelope so I can reply. Letters of praise and criticism are appreciated. All fan mail and job offers will be forwarded to the individual artists upon request.

PLUGS ***

Here's a list of a few nice items. Check 'em out.


Comix Unlimited #2 with Brian Buniak, George Erling. Digest size, 32 pages, \$.60 a copy from: M&M Enterprises, P.O. Box 394, Cranford, N.J. 07016.

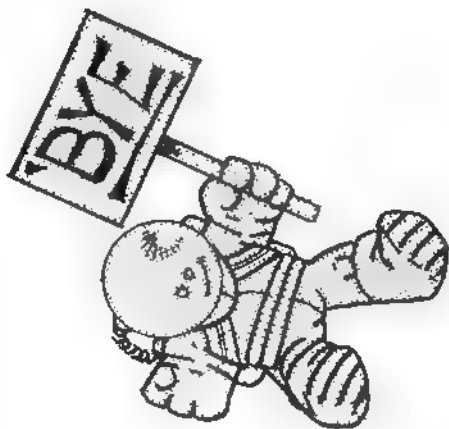
QUACK #1-6/STAR-REACH #1-1 —\$1.25 an issue from Mike Friedrich, P.O. Box 385, Hayward, CA 94543. Good stuff (especially Quack #5!)

Dr. Wirtham's Comix & Stories #1 & 2 —\$1.25 each, postpaid, 32 pages; Glossy stock from Clifford Neal, 378 Judson Ave., Mystic, Conn. 06355. Very nice art.

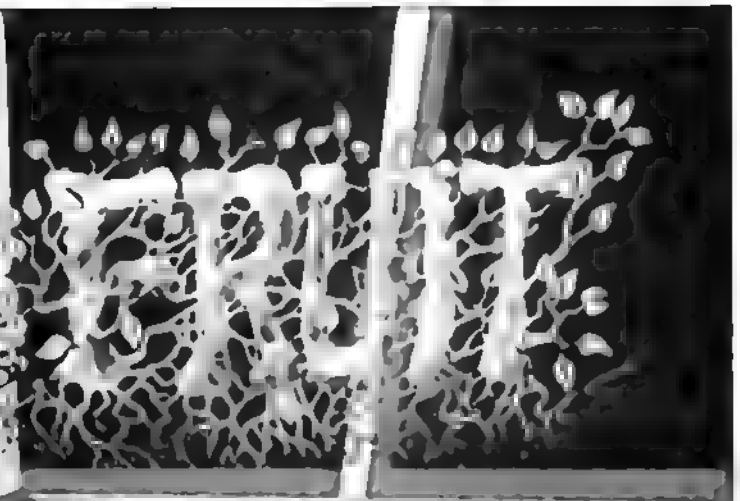
New Paltz Comix #2 —\$1.25 postpaid, 48 pages. M. Gilbert, 15 El Toyonal, Orinda, CA 94563. Must be over 18.

LUMINOUS WIND a portfolio by Mark Roland, printed by Bagginer Press; 10 plates in an illustrated die-cut folder. Limited Edition of 1100, \$5.00 retail; 400 Sunnyslope, Oakland, CA.

Best wishes,
 **Michael T. Gilbert** OCT. 1977
Editor



CRASH



IT'S DONE! I'VE GOTTEN EVEN WITH THAT VILE, DISGUSTING OLD HOMO, THAT FRUIT! I ONLY WISH I COULD HAVE KILLED HIM SLOWER, BUT NOW IT'S TOO LATE! THAT DROP SHOULD HAVE BUSTED HIM UP GOOD!



I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM. WE'D JUST MOVED INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MY FOLKS HAD SENT ME TO THE STORE BY MYSELF.



HE WAS THERE WITH HIS OLD CRONIES. THEY TEASED ME AS I WALKED PAST



THEY DIDN'T TRY ANYTHING THAT TIME AND I WENT AROUND THE BLOCK AND CUT THROUGH THE ALLEY TO GET TO OUR APARTMENT WHEN DAD GOT HOME THAT NIGHT, I TOLD HIM...



THOSE MEN ARE HOMOS, QUEERS, FRUIT! THEY'RE SICK AND THEY MIGHT TRY TO GRAB YOU AND MAKE YOU DO THINGS! STAY AWAY, DAVID!

I PROMISED TO AVOID THE MEN, BUT I WASN'T REALLY SURE WHAT DAD MEANT BY THOSE NAMES HE CALLED THEM.



HOMOS... QUEERS... FRUITS! THOSE ARE FUNNY NAMES FOR PEOPLE!

FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS I STAYED AWAY FROM THE GROCERY IN MY EXPLORATION OF THE REST OF THE AREA, I MADE A FRIEND... RICHIE!



ONE DAY WE FOUND SOME BOTTLES IN AN ALLEY. WE HEADED OFF FOR THE GROCERY TO TURN THEM IN FOR THE DEPOSIT. TO GET THERE WE WOULD HAVE TO PASS THE OLD MEN



I WAS READY TO RUN, BUT RATHER THAN BEING AFRAID OF THEM, RICHIE SEEMED TO FIND THEM INTERESTING. ONE OF THEM EVEN PICKED HIM UP. I WATCHED, SCARED.

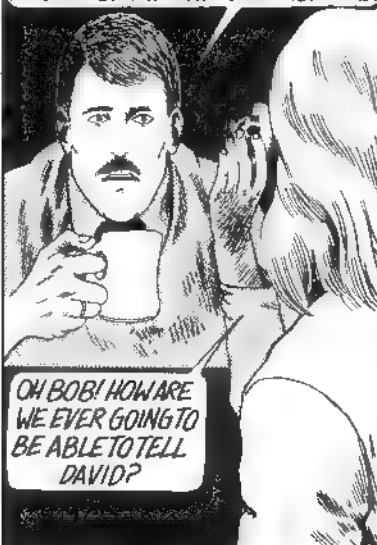


THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HIM, THOUGH, AND SOON WE HAD CASHED IN OUR BOTTLES AND WERE ENJOYING OUR SUGARY TREASURES.



AT THE TIME I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE DREAMING OR THAT MY ILLNESS HAD MADE ME HEAR FUNNY OR SOMETHIN' MOM AND DAD WERE TALKING SOFTLY. THEY MUST HAVE THOUGHT I WAS STILL NAPPING.

.. FOUND HIM IN AN ALLEY VOMITING UP SOME KIND OF GREEN STUFF! HE DIED ON THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL



ON BOB! HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO TELL DAVID?

TELL ME WHAT MOM?!

SON.. YOUR FRIEND RICHIE .. HE WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY WITH YOU ANY MORE..

HE'S... DEAD?



I COULD THINK OF ONLY ONE THING

THE FRUITS! THEY DID IT TO HIM! THEY KILLED RICHIE!

BOB?

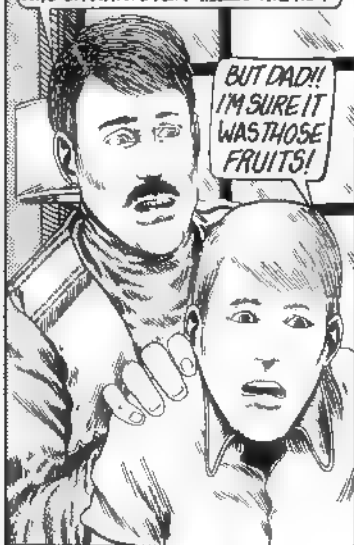
THERE MAY BE SOMETHING TO WHAT HE SAYS... TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW DAVID!



I TOLD MY DAD ABOUT RICHIE AND HOW FRIENDLY HE HAD GOTTEN TO BE WITH THEM AND HOW AFRAID I WAS OF THEM. MY DAD CALLED THE POLICE AND THEY INVESTIGATED THE "OLD FRUITS". NOTHING COULD BE FOUND LINKING THEM TO HIS DEATH.

DON'T WORRY SON! THEY'LL FIND WHO OR WHATEVER KILLED RICHIE!

BUT DAD!! I'M SURE IT WAS THOSE FRUITS!



I REALLY BELIEVED THAT THE "FRUITS" HAD KILLED RICHIE! I DIDN'T KNOW WHY THEY DID AND NO ONE WOULD TELL ME WHAT IT WAS THAT KILLED HIM, BUT I WAS SURE THEY WERE AT FAULT AND MY HATRED OF THEM GREW!

JUST SHUT UP YOU ROTTEN CREEPS!



LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER RICHIE DIED MY FATHER HAD A CHANCE TO TRANSFER TO A BETTER PAYING JOB IN DENVER AND WE PULLED UP OUR ROOTS AGAIN AND WERE ON OUR WAY I STILL REMEMBER THE PECULIAR SMILE THAT ONE OLD "FRUIT" GAVE ME AS WE DROVE PAST.



THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS BROUGHT ME INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH SOME OF "CIVILIZED" MAN'S UGLIEST BEHAVIOR. WE'D BEEN IN DENVER ONLY A FEW MONTHS WHEN FEDERAL NARCOTICS AGENTS ACTING ON A "TIP" BROKE INTO OUR APARTMENT, GUNS DRAWN.



THE SUPRIZE RAID WAS TOO MUCH FOR MY FATHER'S WEAK HEART. HE CRUMPLED TO THE FLOOR IN THE GRIP OF A HEART ATTACK.



MY MOTHER'S SUDDEN IMPULSIVE MOVE TO AID HIM WAS MOTIVE ENOUGH FOR A NERVOUS AGENT TO BLOW HER HEAD OFF. THEY HAD NO WARRANT, THEY FOUND NO DRUGS AND I NOW HAD NO PARENTS.



MY AUNT AND UNCLE IN SIOUX CITY, IOWA, RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED CUSTODY OF ME. THEY WERE SATANISTS AND ENTHUSIASTIC ALCOHOLICS. I SAW MORE SICKNESS IN SIX YEARS THAN ANYONE SHOULD EVER SEE.



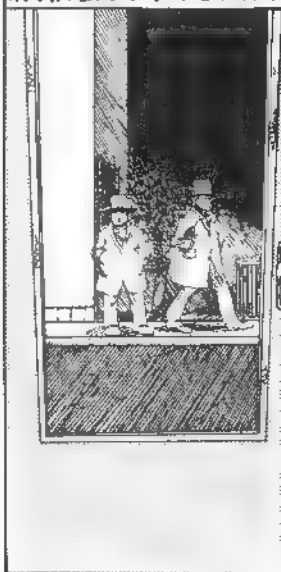
WHEN I TURNED 19, THE MILITARY CLAIMED ME. I SPENT 18 MONTHS HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO SAIGON. 18 MONTHS BROODING, SWEATING, DOPING, HATING MOST OF ALL I HATED THAT OLD "FRUIT", THE ONE I KNEW KILLED RICHIE. WHEN MY DISCHARGE CAME THROUGH I BOUGHT A ONE-WAY TICKET TO MILWAUKEE.



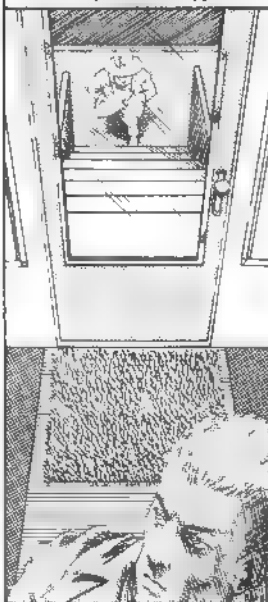
I TOOK A CAB DOWN THE OLD STREET AND IT WAS AS IF NOTHING HAD CHANGED. THE "FRUITS" WERE GATHERED ON THE SIDEWALK WHERE THEY HAD ALWAYS BEEN. THE CAB CREPT SLOWLY PAST THEM BUT THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT THEY RECOGNIZED ME.



I GOT A ROOM UPTOWN AND RETURNED WITH A RENTED CAR. I WATCHED THE GROUP FROM A HALLWAY ACROSS THE STREET UNTIL LATE. THEY SEEMED TO DISCUSS SOMETHING BRIEFLY AND THEN DEPARTED SLOWLY IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.



I WAS SUPRIZED TO FIND THE ONE "FRUIT" I WAS MOST INTERESTED IN WALKING TOWARD THE BUILDING I WAS WAITING IN WHEN I SAW HIM START UP THE STAIRS, I HURRIED TO A CLOSET AND HID INSIDE



HE ENTERED AND WENT TO THE STAIRWELL AND BEGAN TO WALK UP. I FOLLOWED QUIETLY AND STOPPED HIM IN THE AREA OVERLOOKING THE HIGH-CEILINGED LOBBY.



YOU KILLED RICHIE!

HE WAS STARTLED AT FIRST, BUT THEN A LOOK OF RECOGNITION APPEARED ON HIS FACE AND HIS FEAR SUBSIDED TO A KIND OF UNEASINESS



I KNOW YOU, THE SHY ONE, LITTLE RICHIE'S FRIEND, DAVID.

WHY DID YOU KILL MY FRIEND?

I WAS STUNNED! I HAD ANTICIPATED SQUIRMING, DEVIOUS ANSWERS, FRIGHTENED, STUTTERING DENIALS. INSTEAD HE SPOKE BLUNTLY, DIRECTLY, AS IF WE WERE DISCUSSING THE WEATHER!

WE MEANT RICHIE NO HARM, BUT THE DAY HE VISITED US BY HIMSELF. I GUESS I USED POOR JUDGEMENT. RICHIE WENT WITH US INTO THE ALLEY AND I TOLD HIM THAT IF HE WASN'T AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT, HE COULD EARN A DOLLAR HE WAS WILLING, SO I LET HIM... TASTE ME.



TASTE YOU? YOU GODDAM FILTHY MONSTER!!!

MY PUNCH SENT HIM TO THE FLOOR. HE ROSE... SLOWLY, UNCERTAINLY



DAVID! YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG! WE'RE DIFFERENT!

THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG. I JUST LOST CONTROL... TOO MUCH! TOO FAST WE COULD NOT HELP HIM. WE WERE AFRAID.

HIS WORDS POUNDED IN MY HEAD, MY FOOT THRUST OUT DEADLY, EFFECTIVE. IT SENT HIM SMASHING INTO THE RAILING AND THEN OUT AND... DOWN. HOW DARE HE SAY THAT ABOUT RICHIE? THAT FOUL, DISGUSTING... FRUIT! TRYING TO MAKE IT SOUND LIKE RICHIE WAS A QUEER! RICHIE WOULD HAVE NEVER TASTED "A MAN"!



CAN YOU REALLY BLAME ME? IT'S
GOING TO BE ALL I CAN DO TO
HOLD MYSELF BACK WHEN I WALK
INTO THAT ROOM I'M GOING TO
WANT TO SMASH WHATEVER'S
LEFT OF HIM INTO SOFT RED PULP!



OH GOD! HE
WASN'T HUMAN!
JUICE... SEEDS
...HE WAS A...



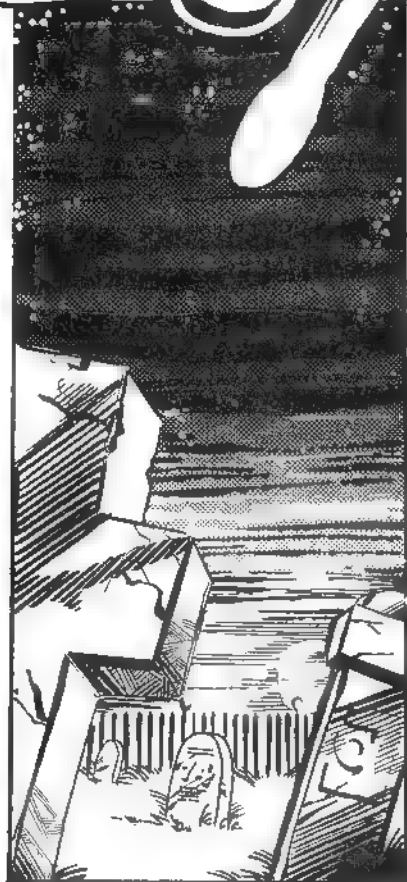
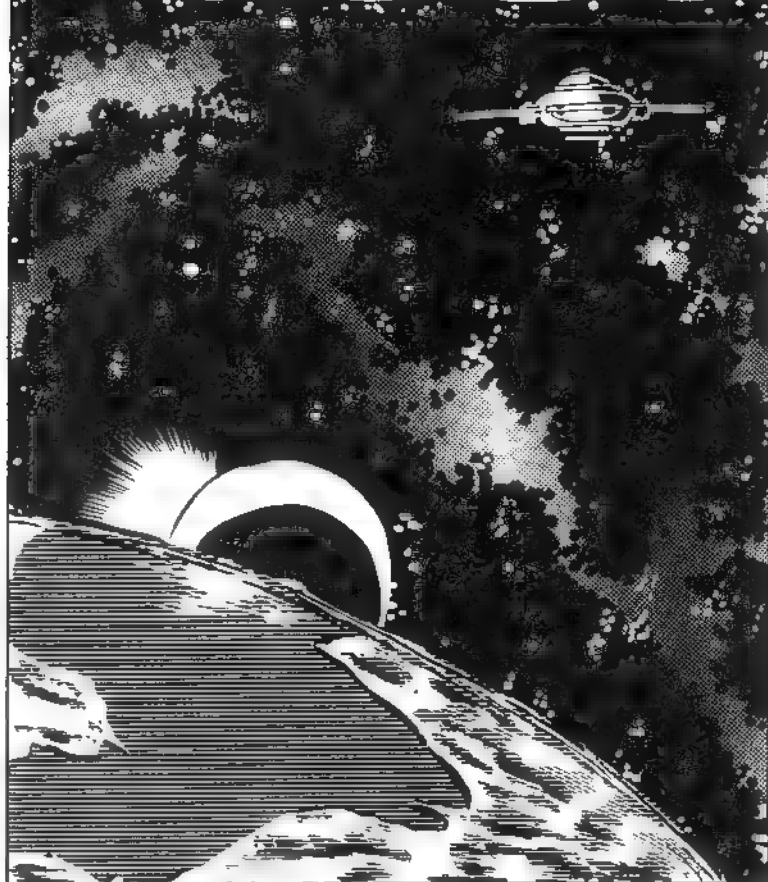
...FRUIT? NO,
DAVID... A
VEGETABLE!!

LIKE US,
DAVID! LIKE
YOU SOON
WILL BE!!

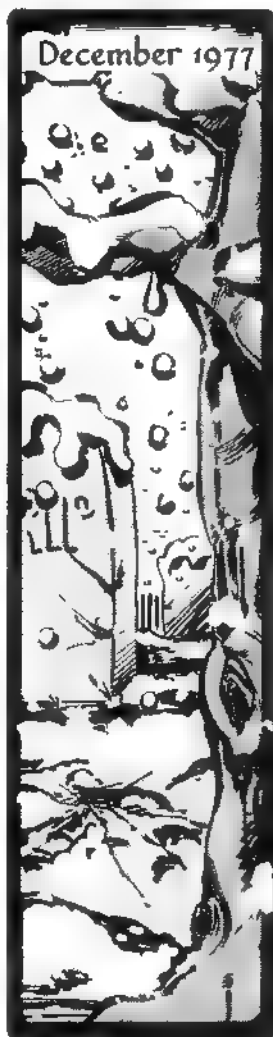


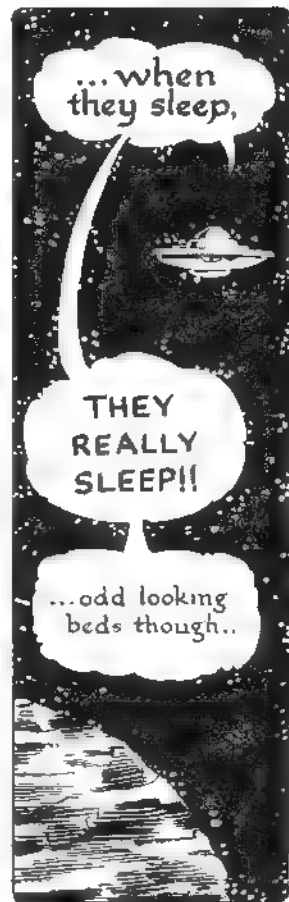
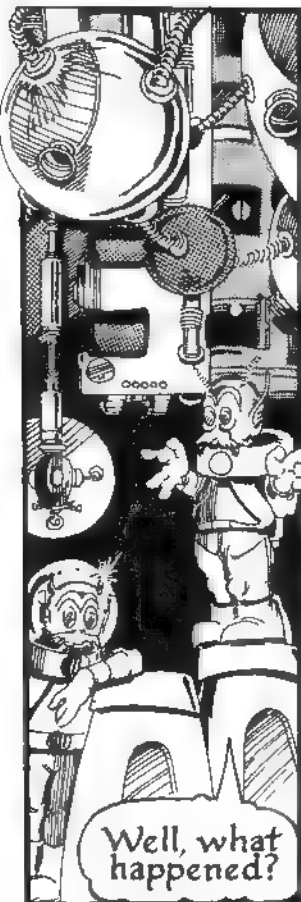
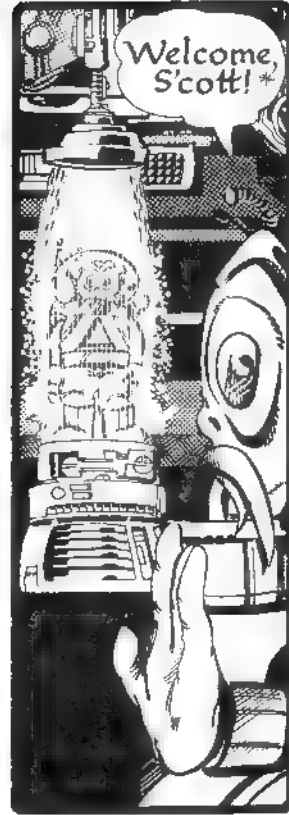


POOF!

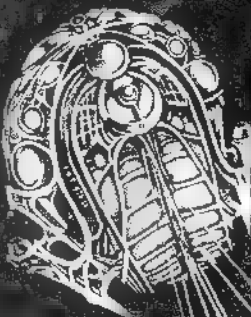


Script &
Layout:
Michael T. Gilbert
Pencils
& Inks:
Alan J. Gordon
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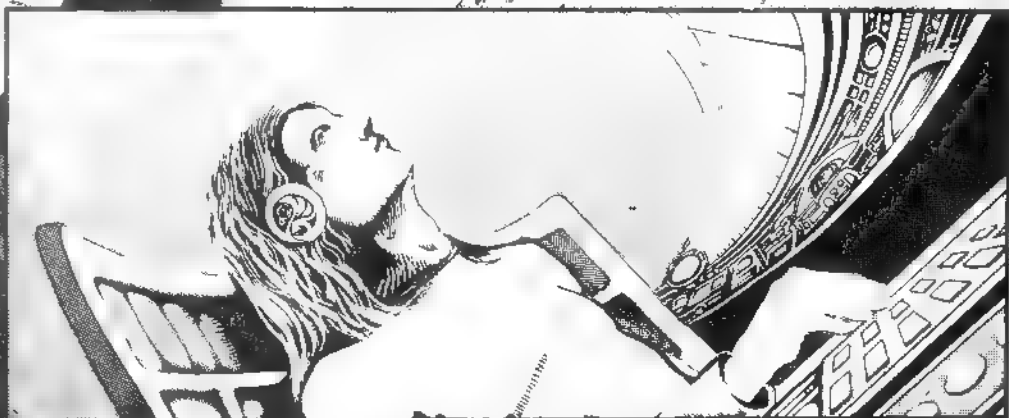


THERES NO RACE LIKE HOME



A SQUADRON OF THE GREY WORLDS HOVERED OVER THE PLANET KRON. THE SHIPS SKITTERING BLUE BEAMS MADE THEM RESEMBLE GANT LUNG-LEGGED SPIDERS DANCING ON A SPHERE OF FIRE. THE KRONIONS, IT SEEMED, HAD OBJECTED TO THE ECONOMIC PROPOSALS OF THE GREY WORLDS AND HENCE WERE BEING RELIEVED OF THEIR LIVES, FLORA AND FAUNA. WHEN THE FIRES HAD COOLED THE REMAINING RESOURCES WOULD BE RELOCATED WITH A MINIMUM OF RESISTANCE.

INSIDE COLD BLACK STONE A MAN WATCHED AS A WORLD DIED.



DANIEL PHILIP PERRAUD ACCELERATED HIS HEARTBEAT AND FELT HIS BRAIN SLOW THE DEATH-SHIPS TO A FRACTION OF THEIR PREVIOUS SPEED.

WITH A SINGLE MOTION
HE SETTLED THE
ASTEROID FRAGMENT
THAT HAD DROPPED
HIS VESSEL.

AND DROVE INTO THE
FORMATION OF PLANET
BURNERS

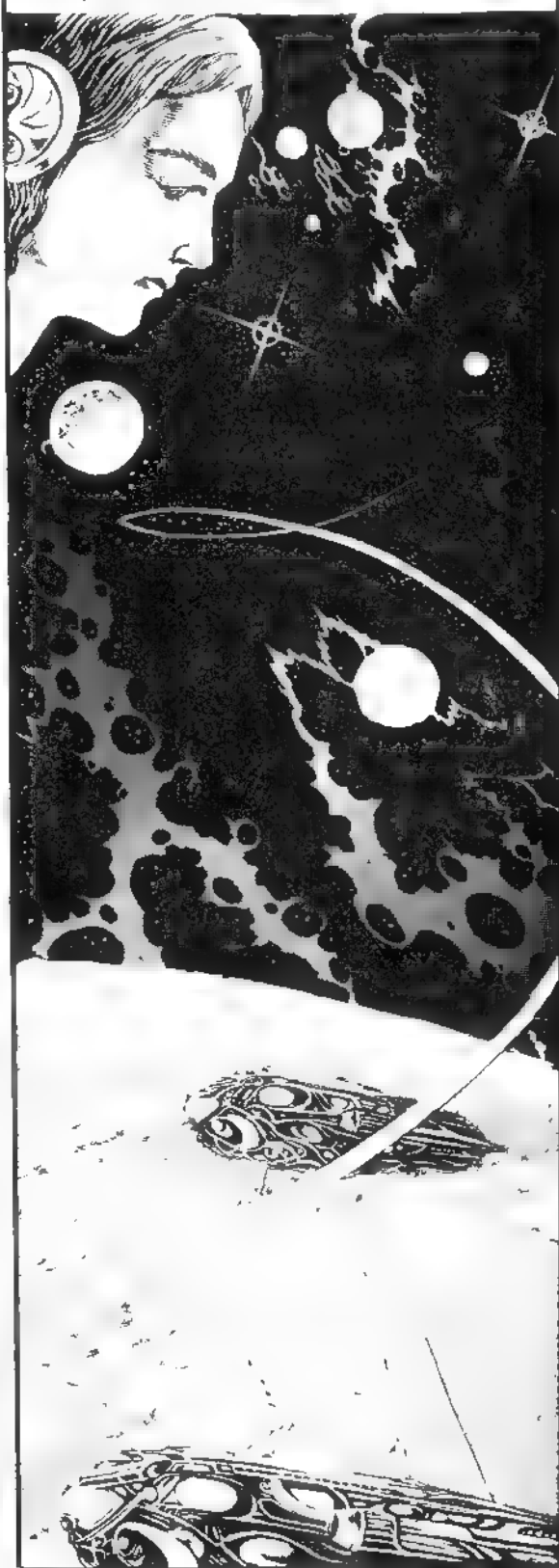


M. ROLAND

IN THE MOST RED ORANGE
LIGHT STREAMED OUT FROM HIS
SHIP IN A DOZEN DIRECTIONS,
MANNING A GREY WORLD.



AND CAUSING ANOTHER TO LOSE ITS HELM AND
CAREEN DOWN INTO THE FLAMING EMBRACE OF
KIRON. AS DAN'S SHIP SPIRALLED OUT OF RANGE.



PUSHING HIS CRAFT TO ITS LIMIT HE PUT A GREAT DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE SITE OF HIS MOST RECENT PERSONAL APPEARANCE

DANIEL PHILIP PERKINS - A MAN WHO 10 YEARS AGO WOULD HAVE LAUGHED ALOUD IF ANYONE HAD SUGGESTED HE MIGHT TAKE ONE OF HIS ROLES SERIOUSLY.

A CHILD WHO GREW UP VERY LATE AND VERY FAST.

A WARRIOR IN WHOSE EYES LIVED THE PAIN OF MANY.

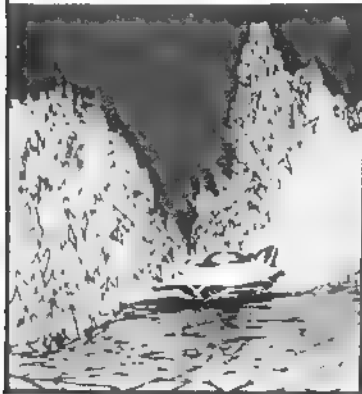


A SPECK OF DUST ALONE.

SEVERAL LIGHT YEARS THIS SIDE OF SAFETY HE SPOTTED A CRYSTAL REEF DREAMING IN THE VOID.

CURIOUS!
GOING TO TAKE A VACATION I AM.

ONCE I WOULD HAVE BEEN
A VILLAGER



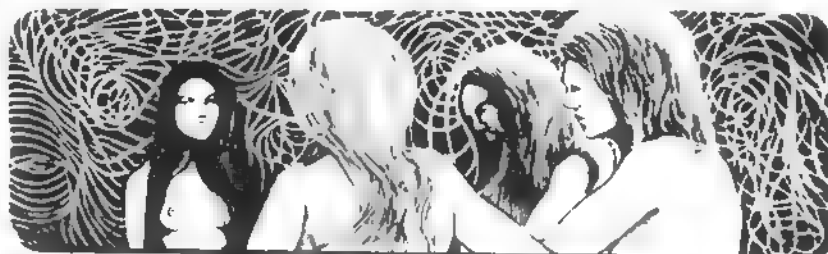
FROM A COMPARTMENT HE REMOVED A
VIAL FILLED WITH A BLUE GREEN FLUID
AN ANTICIPATORY SMILE CAME TO HIS LIPS



HE MEASURED 2 MILLIMETERS INTO A HOLLOW
GLASS TUBE, THEN LET IT FORM A DROP IN HIS
PALM WHERE IT WAS RUBBED IN AND ABSORBED



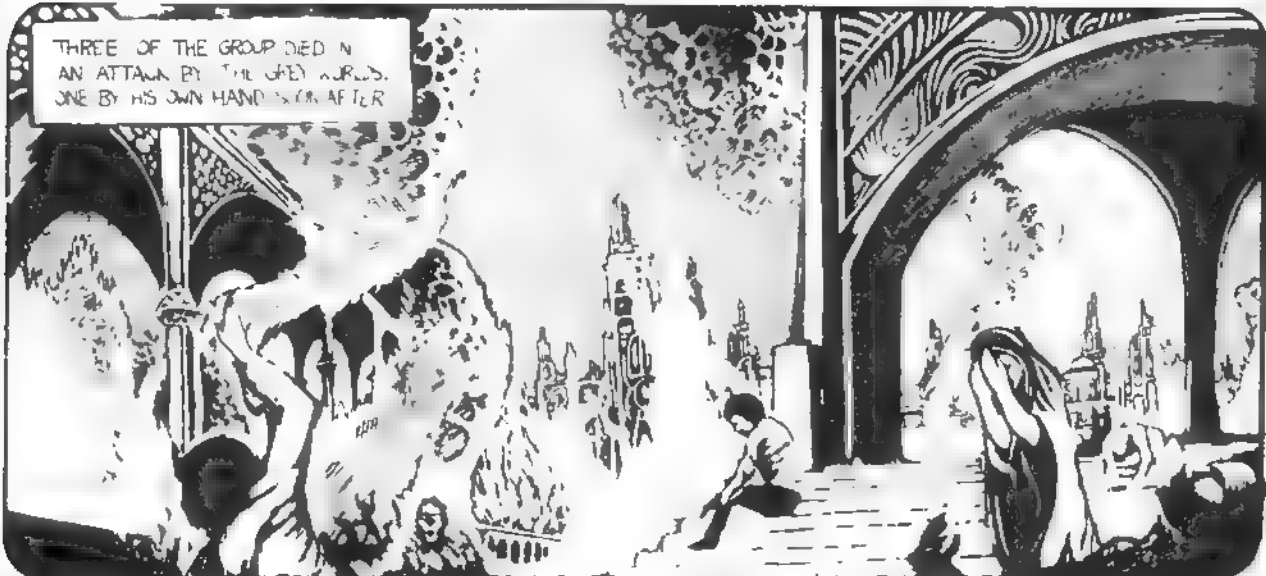
WHILE DYRILIAN WAS A
DRUG MOST COMMONLY AS
SOCATED WITH ITS EFFECTS
ON THE PSYCHIC ABILITIES OF
NON OR PARTIAL TELEPATHS,
ITS HALLUCINATORY AND
ADDICTIVE QUALITIES
WERE NOT UNKNOWN.



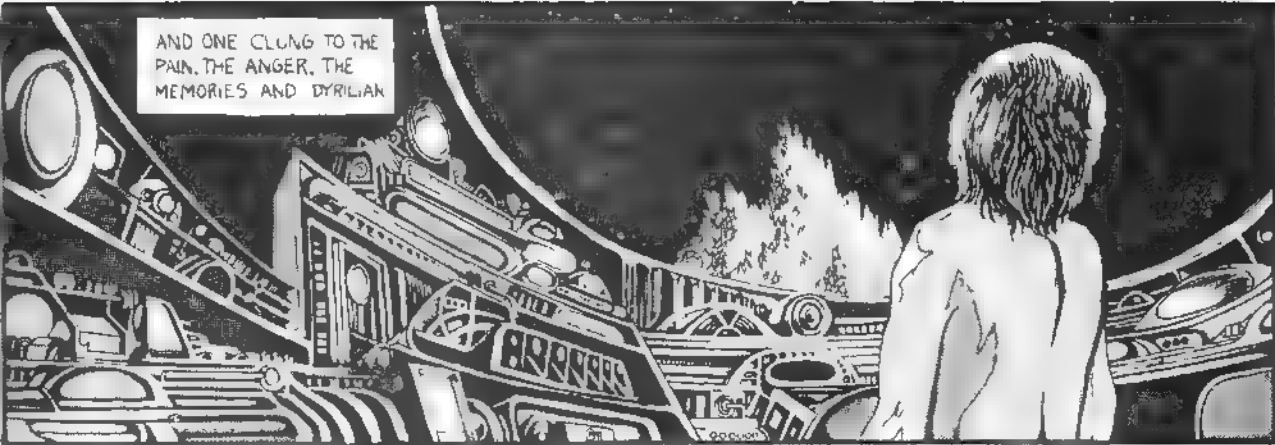
DANIEL HAD FIRST TAKEN
DYRILIAN IN A PAUL
WITH A THEATER
GROUP HE WAS GOING
WITH, BEFORE THE
WARS BEGAN AGAIN.
HEY TOOK THEM
TO AN OBSCURE OUTPOST TO
FREE FALL THEATER
PERFORMING BRECHT
SHAKESPEARE AND
WILDE, AMONG OTHERS



THREE OF THE GROUP DIED IN
AN ATTACK BY THE GREY WOLVES.
ONE BY HIS OWN HAND WHEN AFTER



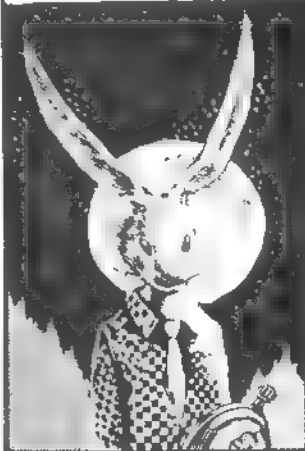
AND ONE CLUNG TO THE
PAIN, THE ANGER, THE
MEMORIES AND DYRILIAN



THE CRYSTAL LANDSCAPE
BEFORE HIM GREW IN
INTENSITY AND WIDENED
IN SPECTRUM. HE FELT
A GENTLE TUGGING ON
HIS MIND, THEN HE BEGAN
TO PERCEIVE WHORLS OF
LIGHT, JUST OUT OF FOCUS



ONE OF THE WHORLS SOLIDIFIED
INTO AN OVERSIZED RABBIT
GAZING AT AN OLD TIMEPIECE



WHO IMPATIENTLY DASHED
OFF INTO AN OPENING IN
THE REEF.



LEWIS
CARROLL!

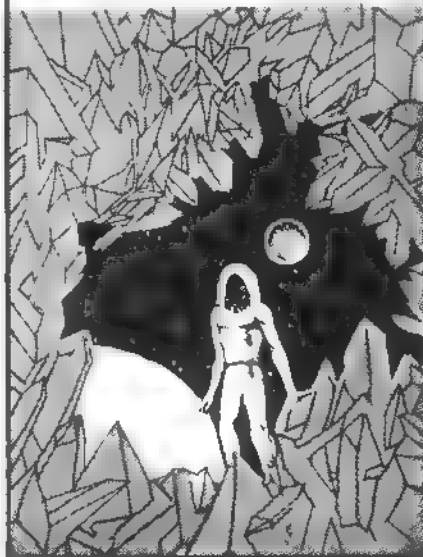


SOME KIND OF EXTERNAL MIND PULLED
A SYMBOL OF INTICEMENT FROM DEEP
IN HIS CHILDHOOD MEMORIES. DYRILIAN
MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE CATALYST.



BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING
MORE HERE. SOMEONE NEW
YET INTIMATE ENOUGH TO
MEET ON THEIR TERMS.

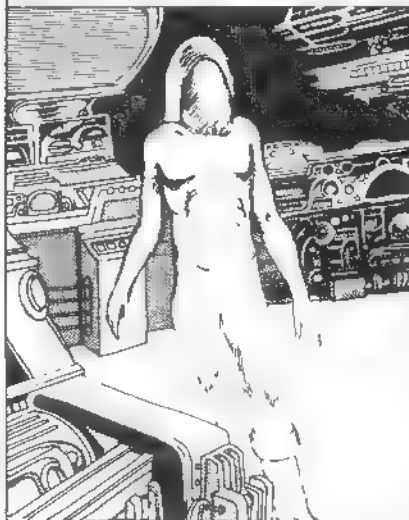
AS HE APPROACHED THE OPENING HE
HEARD SINGING. WORDLESS, SOARING
ANDROGENOUS VOICES THAT WERE
BEYOND EARS



WANDERING IN CRYSTAL CATACOMBS HE
FOUND A STEEL WALL TORN OPEN..



REVEALING A NICHE OF MACHINERY
SKELETAL REMAINS OF A COLONY.



LEAVING THE ROOM THE SINGING
FADED, DISSOLVED INTO A
SINGLE BEAUTIFUL FEMALE VOICE



AND THEN HE SAW HER,

GODDESS, MOTHER, LOVER, CHILD, ANIMA



AN IMAGE IN
HIS MIND -
THE DESIGN
OF A MORE
FINITE
CONSCIOUSNESS



HER SONG PLEADED
WITH HIS SPIRIT AND
IGNORED HIS GLANCE
HE BEGAN TO REALIZE



WHAT IT
WAS SHE
ASKED OF
HIM.



A VOICE DEEP IN HIS MIND CRIED NO— HE TENSED AND WAS SWEEPED INTO A CHASM OF FEAR. THE VOICES FILTERED BACK SLOWLY, COMPLIMENTING AND GRADUALLY ABSORBING THE WOMAN'S SPECTRAL TONE



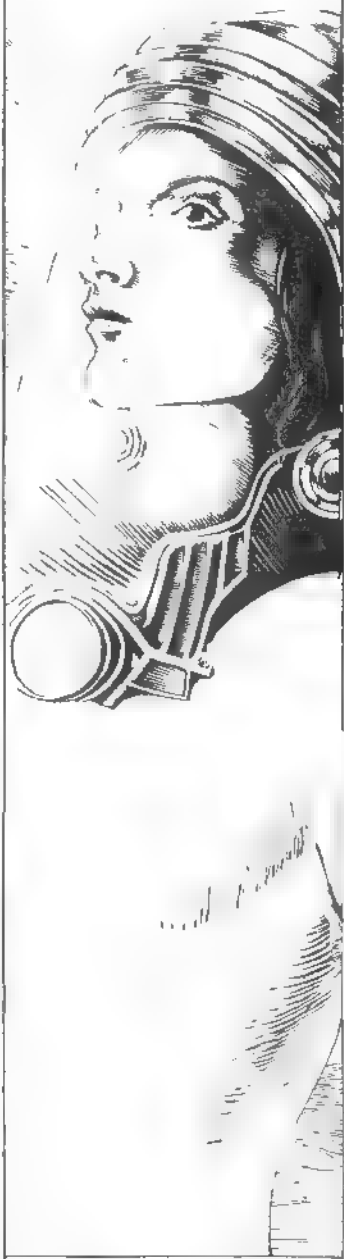
AS SHE GUIDED BACK THROUGH THE CRYSTALS.



HE CONTRACTED INTO HIS IDENTITY AND ISOLATION, UNTIL THE VOICES DRANK HIS MIND CLEAR. THE CRYSTALS LIQUIFIED AND FLOWED AROUND HIM IN MOLTEN GOLD RIVULETS...



FINALLY SURROUNDING HIM WITH A WALL OF SWIRLING GOLDEN LIGHT.



THE SINGING ROSE IN AN IMPOSSIBLE CRESCENDO THAT UNTANGLED THE DIVISIONS IN HIS MIND. DANIEL HEARD HIS OWN VOICE JOINED IN THE SONG. AT LAST EVEN THAT SEPARATION WAS IMPERCEPTIBLE.

HE WENT OUT.

IN RUSHING
LUMINOUS DANCE
HE BECAME THEM.
FROM AN ECHO OF
HIS FORM, THE BREATH
OF THE COSMOS A ROAR
AT HIS CENTER,

HE JOINED THEM IN BEING
THE LIVING SEEING REEF,
AND FINALLY THE BRILLIANCE OF
FOCUSED LIGHT, AND A SINGLE
DARK DEEP SPECK OF REGRET.
A FILAMENT OF LIGHT REMOVED
ITSELF INTO AN EMPTY SHELL.



TIRED OXYGEN-STARVED
EYES OPEN.



FATIGUED LIMBS CARRY
PIECES OF A MAN TO
THE WORLD OF SEPARATENESS



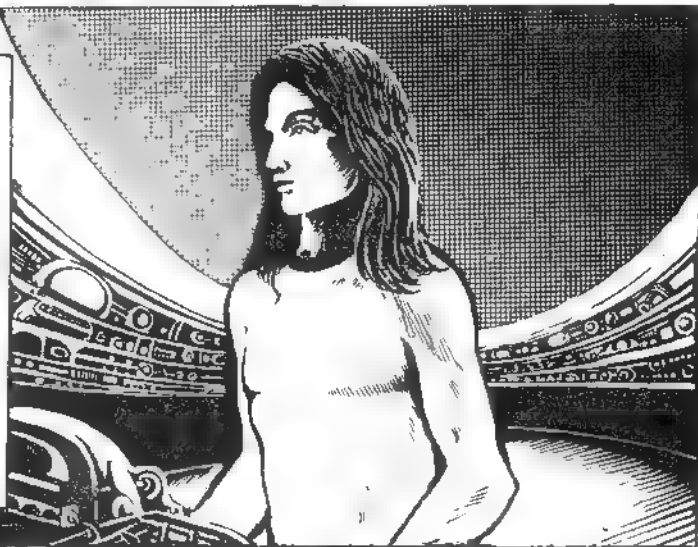
HE ENTERS THE FAMILIAR
COMFORT OF A STEEL
CAGE WITH THE
WEARINESS OF A CHILD

WHO CAN NEVER RETURN HOME.

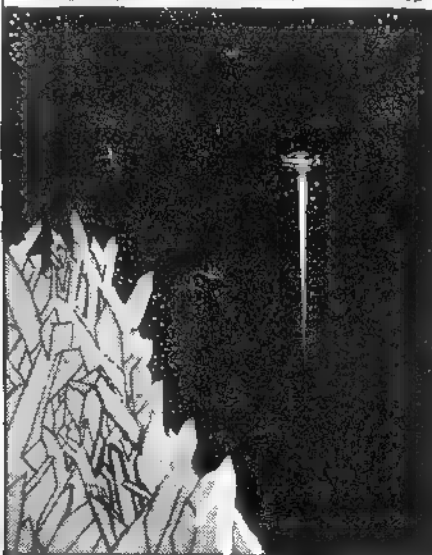


DANIEL LOOKED OUT OVER THE REEF
AND CONTEMPLATED THE DICHOTOMY
OF HIS BEING. AS A MIRROR
REFLECTION THAT REMAINS AFTER
YOU TURN AWAY, PART OF DANIEL
WAS JOYFULLY LOCKED INTO
THE CRYSTAL WORLD. FOREVER
AWAKE IN NEON FIRE.

THE CRYSTALS ALSO AMPLIFIED AND
BLENDED HIS PSYCHIC ENERGY
WITH THE ENERGIES OF THE LOST
COLONISTS. HIS MOTIVATIONS AND
DESIRES WERE DIFFERENT, BUT
ONE THING REMAINED UNCHANGED,



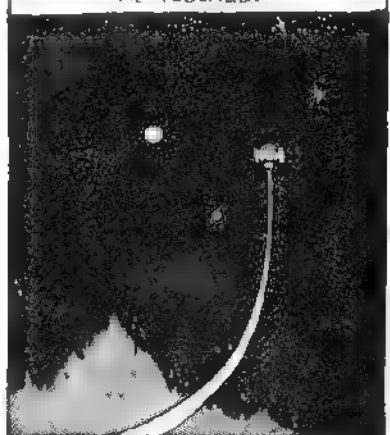
THE GREY WORLDS MUST BE STOPPED.



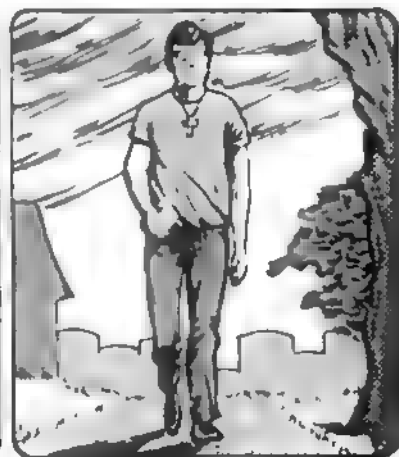
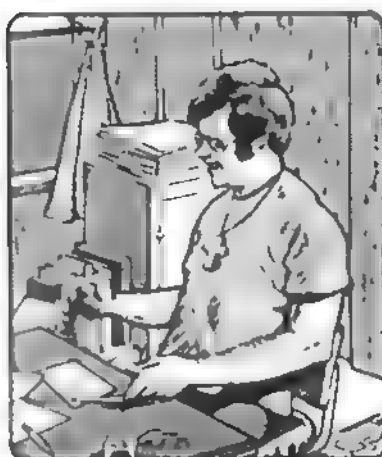
DANIEL WAS A FULL TELEPATH NOW,
AND SOMETHING MORE — A
SYNAPSE WHO COULD LINK PEOPLE,
EVEN PLANETS TOGETHER WHILE
REMAINING INTANGIBLE, EGOLESS.



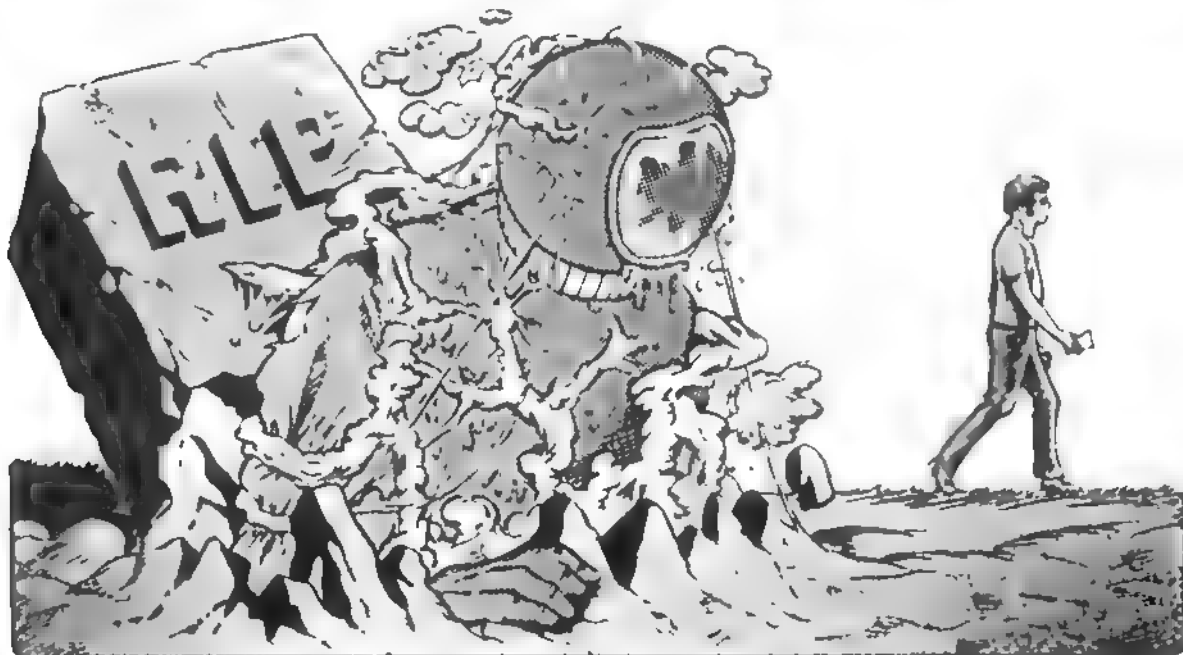
THERE WOULD BE NO MYTHS
OR MONUMENTS. THE HISTORIANS
NEVER RECORDED HIS NAME, HE
LEFT ONLY A SONG RIPPLING
OUTWARD IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE
HE TOUCHED.

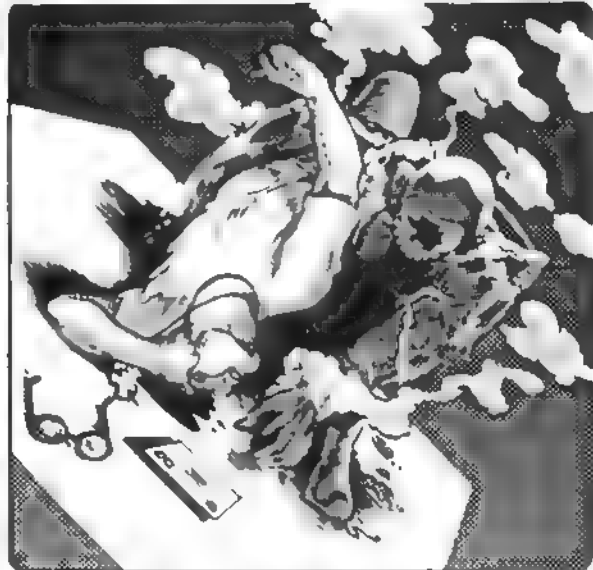
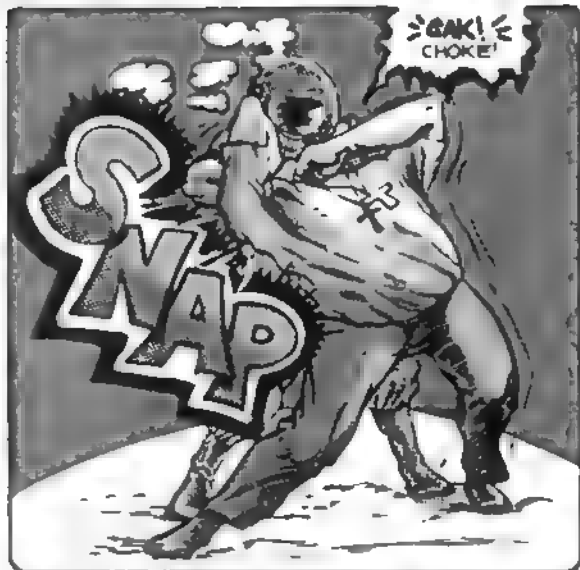


DEAR **MIKE** - SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG TO GET BACK TO YOU B. IT I RAN INTO A LOT OF TRAPLES WITH THE STORY YOU WANT ME TO DO (THE ONE **INSPIRED** BY YOUR ASTRONAUT FROM THE GRAVE P.K. REMEMBER?) THE ONLY IDEAS I COULD COME UP WITH ARE ABSOLUTELY **STUPID** ONES ABOUT JOHN GLEN RETURNING FROM THE DEAD AFTER A **LOST** ELECTION AND OTHER SUCH **GARBAGE!** THE THOUGHT OF SOME ROTTING **SMELLY** CORPSE IN A SPACE SUIT IS A GOOD ONE, BUT **HONESTLY**, WHO BESIDES **BELA LUGOSI** IS ENOUGH OF AN **ASS** TO BE BURIED IN A COSTUME LIKE **THAT?** I MEAN, **REALLY!** PERHAPS **RACUL** WOULD HAVE BETTER LUCK! SORRY AGAIN! GRUB - **BRIAN**



SCRIPT AND PENCILS - **BRIAN J. BUNIAK** O 176 INKS - **MICHAEL T. GILBERT**





SEVERAL DAYS LATER, IN CALIFORNIA...



Black As Ink

The pages are done,
and so is the day,
and part of the
night.



Now we sit,
without love,
without friends,
without a future,
But with an outlook,
black as ink.

We the artist,
linework is our fame.
Alone is our state,
oh what a state
to be in.
Alone,
what a word, alone.



Copyright 1977.

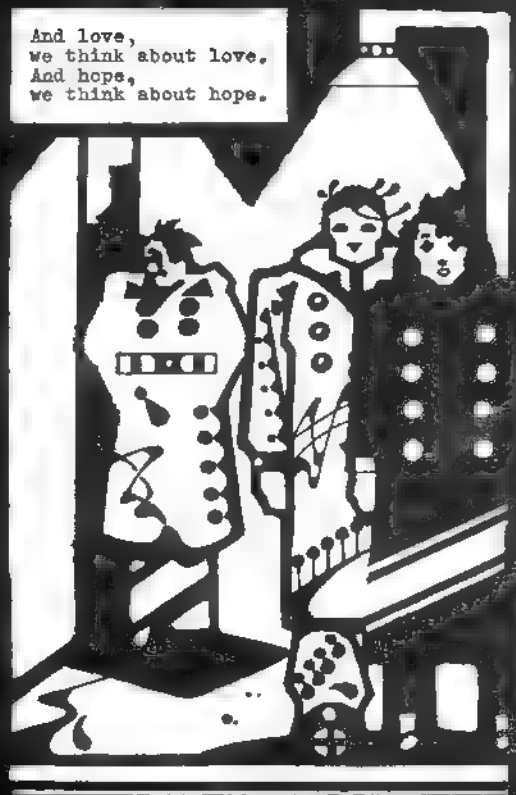
Produced By Jeff Bonivert.

Now let's step into
the night.
We walk in pain,
but we always walk
in style.

KEATON ST.



And love,
we think about love.
And hope,
we think about hope.



We,
the artwork rebels,
return home.
Like in music,
our thoughts are a steady beat.



Perfection is the goal,
but bad habits,
sometimes show.

Now innovator,
this is the end.
But dont stop here,
believing in perfection
is no sin.
Perfection is the goal.

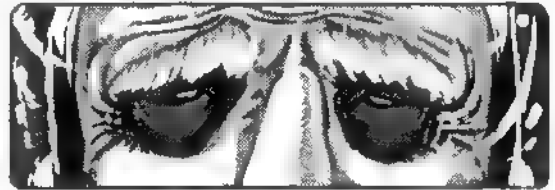
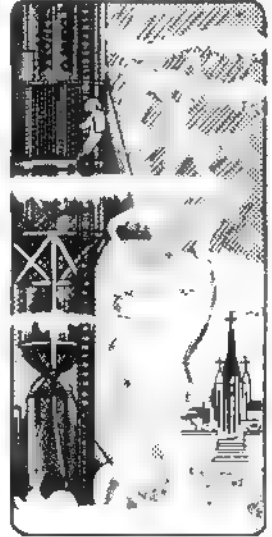
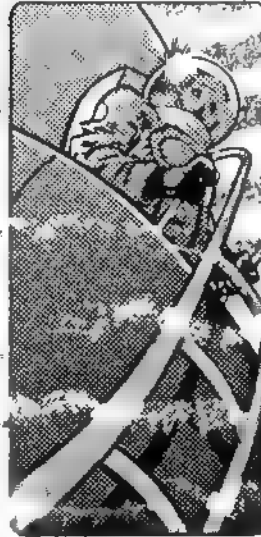
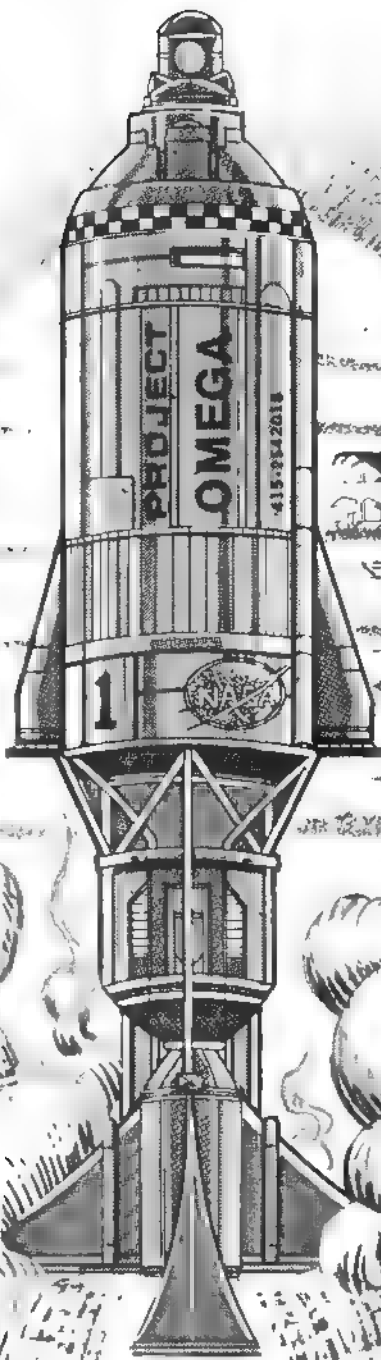
Our outlook may be
black as ink.

But we are the artist,
and may walk in pain,
but always in style.

END

Welcome Home, Traveler...

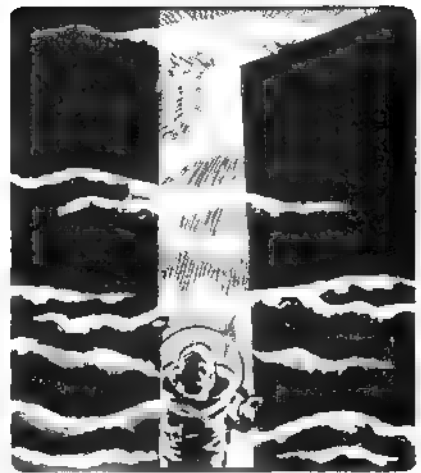
© 1976
MICHAEL T. GILBERT
For Brian



You've Been Gone
A Long Time



Many Things Have Changed



But You're Home Now...



Home



Home To Stay



Home To Rest



In Peace...

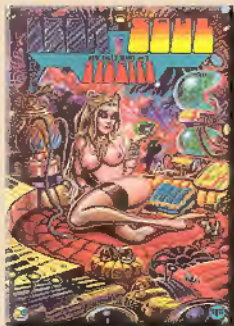
Iron-Soul Stories is dedicated to my
Grandmother,

ANNA NUROCK

Who passed away in February, 1977.
Without her, there wouldn't be an
Iron-Soul Stories.







Sir Real's

UNDERGROUND COMIX CLASSIX

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New Paltz Comix #3

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- Mark Roland - 2, 21(i), 42-50
- Jeff Bonivert - 3-10, 25-27, 53-55
- Raoul Venzina - 11-13+, 18(i), 24(a)
- Bob Kessel - 11-13+
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Comments:

n/a